

# LIVE AND LEARN

WASHINGTON GLADDEN



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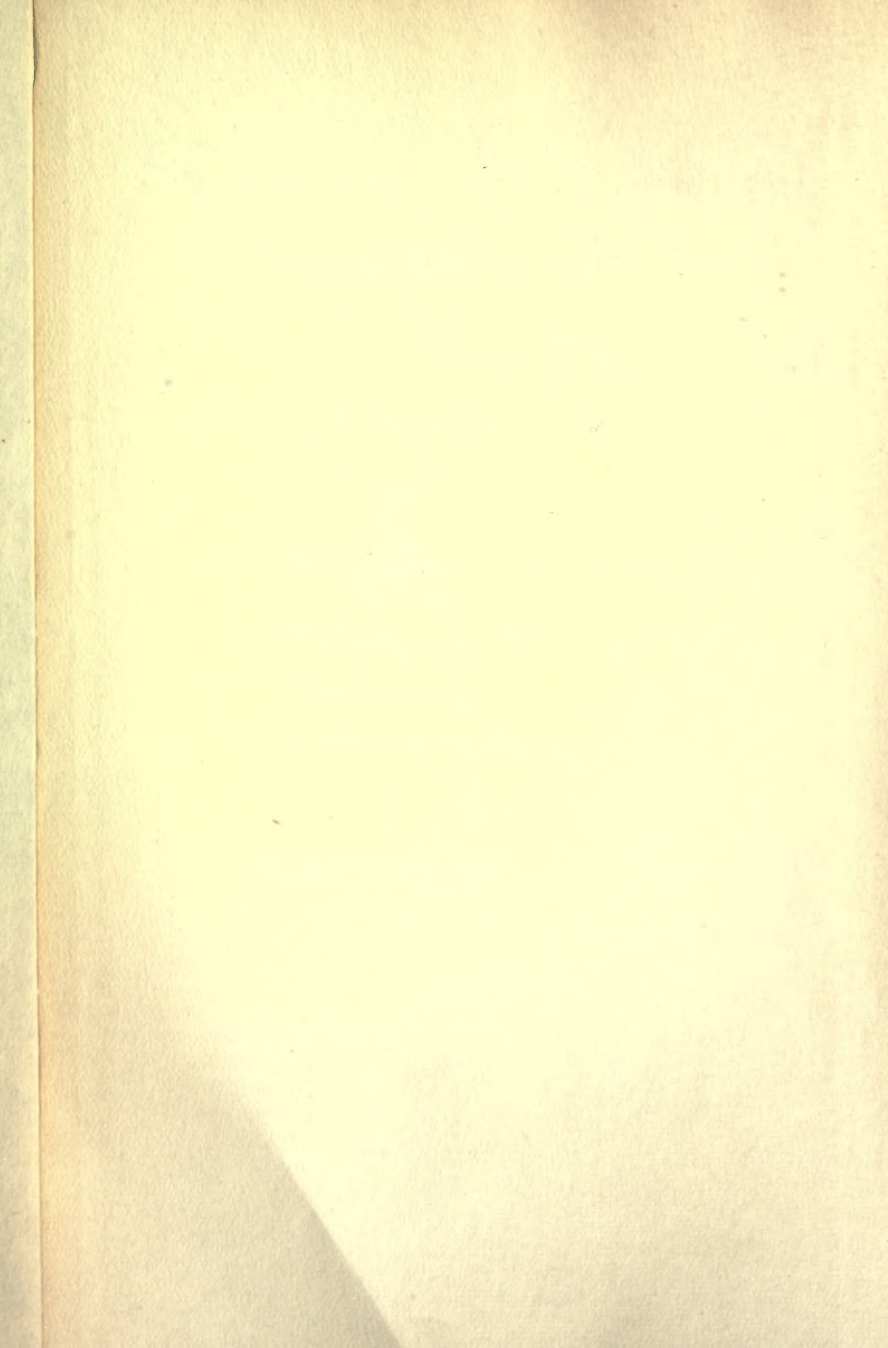
**GORDON SPARLING**

180  
To Gordon P. M. Spaulding,  
on his birthday,

From J. M. Nicholson.

Rosclair, Muskoka.  
Aug. 13<sup>th</sup> 1916.





LIVE AND LEARN



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TORONTO

# LIVE AND LEARN

BY

WASHINGTON GLADDEN

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TO THE YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITIES, THE COLLEGES, AND THE SECONDARY  
SCHOOLS OF AMERICA  
WITH TWO GENERATIONS OF WHOM  
I HAVE LIVED IN FRIENDSHIP  
AND FROM WHOM I HAVE LEARNED MUCH  
OF THAT WHICH IS HERE SET FORTH  
THIS BOOK  
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED



## PREFACE

THE readers of these pages will soon discover that they are facing a platform or a pulpit, and listening to spoken words. They are printed as they were spoken, because any attempt to change them into essays would have altered their essential character. If they have any value, it is because they are the direct communication of a living man to living men and women, of whose presence he is conscious, for whose response he is waiting.

The audiences who have listened to them have included many young men and women, and many also who are no longer young; and I shall be glad if the same thing is true of the readers. They contain many truths the full value of which I did not myself apprehend until youth was long past, and there may be others whose development has been as tardy as my own. On the whole, I am

inclined to hope that, if the book is worth anything, it may be worth nearly as much to parents, and perhaps to teachers, and possibly to preachers, as to the young folks at whom it is chiefly aimed.

W. G.

COLUMBUS, Feb. 19, 1914.

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# LIVE AND LEARN

## I

### LEARNING TO THINK

THIS is a book for learners. People who have finished their education will have no use for it.

This does not mean that it is exclusively for young people. I know a number of men and women who are more than seventy years old, and who are now more eager to learn than they ever were before in their lives; and I know a good many under seventeen who think that they know it all now, and are nearly incapable of learning anything. Such young people will not read the book, and such old people may find something in it.

We begin with learning to think.

Thinking is an art that can be learned by study and practice. It is as truly an art as is bread making or piano playing.

The rudest barbarian has had some training in this art; his thinking powers have been disciplined by use and experience; but the difference between the barbarian and the Harvard professor consists less in the native endowment than in the powers acquired by discipline.

I have seen a boy born in an African jungle taking the lead of his classes in an Ohio High School. Heredity counts for much, in the majority of cases; but there is much that it does not explain. Heredity is strong, but discipline is stronger. Hundreds of thousands of the sons and daughters of well-educated men and women in this land are sinking to-day into intellectual nonentities; hundreds of thousands of the sons and daughters of utterly ignorant parents are rising to-day to intellectual eminence and leadership. I do not say that this is the rule, but it is a familiar fact. The reason why the one class is sinking and the other is rising is not to be found in heredity; the movement in either direction is directly in the face of heredity; it is to be found quite largely in the fact that the one class is

willing to take pains to learn to think, and the other class is not.

The business of education, for the teacher, is mainly training his pupils to think; for the pupil it is learning this lesson. The studies of the schoolroom are chiefly useful as discipline. Information is of value, so is the equipment for practical work which the pupil gains in the school; but neither the information nor the equipment is of much use without the trained faculty, ready for any service which it may be called to perform.

The fact that Columbus discovered the island of San Salvador Oct. 12, 1492, is useful and interesting information, but the pupil who studies history to any purpose learns a great deal more than this when he acquires this information; he finds out something about the ideas respecting the form of the world that filled the minds of Europeans in the days before Columbus; something about the scientific discoveries that turned the thoughts of the great sailor westward and prepared the way for his triumph; something about the obstacles which he had to overcome in carrying

out his purpose ; something, in short, of the historic causes which were at work making ready for this stupendous event, and something of the prodigious consequences which followed from it. By this he is enabled to see how the historic successions hang together ; how the deeds of one era become the seeds of another ; how throughout the ages an increasing purpose runs. When his mind is trained to grasp this wonderful law of progress, and to recognize the dependence of events one upon another, he has learned a lesson which will invest all the events that are happening round about him with wonderful meaning ; which will enable him better to understand the changes now occurring and to predict the changes which may occur. The information is something ; the habit of tracing events to their causes is everything.

Take a much simpler example. One who learns to compute interest on a note with partial payments may have gained an equipment for work that will be of some service to him, if he happens to be loaning or borrowing money. It may be important to him, as a business man, that he should be



able to make the computation accurately. He may be employed by some one who will require this service of him; if he can promptly perform it, he will increase the estimation in which he is held by his employer. It is very possible, however, that one may never be obliged to use this rule of partial payments. I do not remember that I have ever in my life had occasion to use it. Has the study which I put upon that rule been, therefore, of no service to me? Was the time wasted which I gave to it? No, it was not. The study has been of the greatest service. I remember well wrestling with that rule: it took me some time to get the whole process clearly in order in my mind: it was not an easy task, but I mastered it, and I have never forgotten it: I have a distinct recollection of the sense of added power that came to me with the mastery of that task. I had learned to hold my mind firmly to a difficult problem, to keep all the elements distinct, to bring in each element in its proper place, to be patient and persistent, and careful and accurate and methodical in my mental operation; in short, I had made

some progress in learning to think ; I had convinced myself that it was possible for me to conquer difficulties by patient thinking, and that achievement, slight as it now seems, had a positive influence on all my future. Every school task, thoroughly mastered, brings such gains of power ; every school task shirked, through indolence or lack of application, is a source of mental and moral weakness.

Let us remember, then, that the main business in education is learning to think. To say that you will never have occasion to use the particular branches of knowledge to which you may happen to be devoting your time is beside the point : you will have occasion, every day of your life, to use those trained powers of sustained and careful thinking which you acquire in your school discipline.

It is impossible, of course, in the brief space which we can give to this study, to treat with any fulness this great art of thinking. All that I can do is to offer a few hints, some of which may be found serviceable.

1. Remember that in this art, as in every other, practice makes perfect. You learn

to think by thinking, just as you learn to walk by walking, and to swim by swimming. The mind may become nimble and swift and sure in its action, in the same way that the body can, by steady practice.

“Most even of those excellencies which are looked on as natural endowments,” says Locke, “will be found when examined into more narrowly to be the product of exercise, and to be raised to that pitch only by repeated action. Some men are remarked for pleasantries in raillery, others for apologues and apposite diverting stories. This is apt to be taken for the effect of pure nature, and that the rather because it is not got by rules, and those who excel in either of them never purposely set themselves to the study of it as an art to be learned. But yet it is true that at first some lucky hit which took with somebody and gained him commendation, encouraged him to try again, inclined his thoughts and endeavors that way, till at last he insensibly got a facility in it without perceiving how; and that is attributed wholly to nature which was much more the effect of use and practice. I do not deny that

natural disposition may often give the first rise to it, but that never carries a man far without use and exercise, and it is practice alone that brings the powers of the mind or will, as those of the body, to their perfection."

2. The first power to be cultivated in learning to think is the power of attention — the power of fixing the mind upon a definite subject and excluding every other. Locke truly says that one of the great differences, if not the chief difference, between the great thinker and the man of little mental power will be found in this power of attention or mental concentration. There are those who have almost no power at all over the course of thought; ideas good, bad, and indifferent go scurrying through their minds in headlong procession, and they have no power to stop them or turn them aside: if they try to think on any subject, crowds of other thoughts come rushing from every quarter and drive from their minds the themes upon which they are trying to reflect. There are pupils who will stand at the blackboard attempting to reduce an equation in algebra, or to demonstrate a theorem in geometry, and it will be evident to all that

their thoughts are not fixed upon the work in hand ; that any little noise calls off their attention. If they sit down with a book and undertake to read a chapter of history, you can see, by the vacant and wandering eye, that they are not thinking of what they are reading. Sometimes the mind becomes utterly powerless under the spell of revery.

This is the vice to be conquered first. Whatever else you fail to do, get command of your own mind. Put a bridle on these fleet coursers and drive them. How is it to be done ? It is to be done by just determining to do it, and persisting in that determination day after day. There is no patent process. It calls for resolution, and perseverance, nothing more ; you can train your mind to obey your will, unless you are an imbecile or an insane person ; and no matter what business you expect to follow, this is the one primary condition of success.

3. When you come to processes of reasoning, be sure of your definitions. Never use a word in an argument without having a distinct idea of its meaning ; and, if it be possible, convey that idea to those with whom you are speaking. Get every subject



of thought clear in your own mind ; sharply discriminated from every other subject with which you are dealing. My old teacher, Mark Hopkins, used to say that half of the disputes among men would be ended at once if they would stop and come to an understanding as to the meaning of the words they were using. When two men are engaged in a hot disputation it is often apparent to the listener that they are using the same words in very different senses. Learning to think is learning to use the words which are the symbols of thought with precision and exactness. A good dictionary will never be far from the hand of the man who wishes to learn to think.

4. Be sure of your facts. Another of the wise sayings of my old teacher was that there are more false facts in the world than false theories. Men often start out in their reasonings from unsound premises, and all their conclusions are therefore invalid. It is unprofitable and discouraging to employ the mind in the discussion of relations which do not exist and of causes that are not proper causes. And one of the first lessons for every thinker to learn is that he

must lay sure foundations. What everybody says ought to be true, but often it is not. Statements which are as far as possible from the truth are set in circulation by some blundering or imaginative person, and are picked up and repeated from one to another until they become the creed of the populace. If you base your reasoning on one of these statements, you will not reach sound conclusions.

Illustrations of the prevalence of beliefs that are utterly erroneous and even preposterous can be picked up in any community. One of the first things told me about Columbus when I first thought of making it my home was that it was the second city in the United States in wealth *per capita*: Hartford, Conn., was first, Columbus second. The story was repeated to me a hundred times, after I came to Columbus; the newspapers frequently printed it; advertisers made the most of it; the Board of Trade used it in its manifestoes. I supposed of course that it was true. But on one occasion when I thought of quoting it, I tried to verify it, and I found that it was absolutely foundationless; the Census fig-

ures showed that instead of being the second it was the sixty-fourth. Since that time I have repeatedly exposed the delusion, but to very little purpose; "everybody" keeps on repeating it, and will, I dare say, till the end of time. Superstitions of all sorts are hard to kill.

A preacher, the pastor of a good church, and a man who had been originally educated for the law, so that he might be supposed to be rather more careful and accurate in statement than ordinary ministers, began a lecture on Mormonism in my pulpit, in my hearing, with this sentence: "It has been said that if the winding sheets of those who have been murdered by the Mormons in Utah could be laid side by side, they would cover New England." The speaker did not intimate that this might possibly be an exaggeration, and I heard nobody among those who listened express any doubt about it. Probably it was accepted as substantially true by most of those who heard it. I was curious to know about how many murders the Mormons had committed, by this computation; and the calculation was easy. I assumed

that a winding sheet covering half a square rod —  $16\frac{1}{2}$  feet in length and  $8\frac{1}{4}$  feet in width — would be ample for most of us. According to the geographies, the territory of the six New England states embraces 61,976 square miles. Multiplying this by 640, the number of acres in a square mile; and this product by 160, the number of square rods in an acre; and this product by 2, to reduce it to half rods, I found that the Mormons were accused of murdering 12,692,684,200 persons, — about ten times the entire population of the earth.

I did not correct the preacher: it would not have done any good; his mind was incapable of accuracy; he had never learned to put this and that together; he is probably delivering that lecture on Mormonism yet, and people are accepting it without questioning.

You often read estimates of the population of American cities which are based on the ratio between the votes or the voters registered and the population. It is nearly always assumed that the proper multiplier is five; that there are five times as many inhabitants as there are legal voters. Why

this assumption should be made I do not know; it is simply one of the things that everybody says. Yet it is perfectly easy to test it. Divide the population of the state, in a census year, by the total vote of that year, and you will get a multiplier. You will find that it is not five, nor anywhere near it.

A great number of such wild inaccuracies are all the while in circulation. In all social matters the current estimates are often absurd. You hear statements made about the victims of drunkenness, about the number of young men in the cities who do not attend church, and a great many other such matters which are simply somebody's wild guesses flung out to the populace and picked up and repeated as indubitable facts.

A marvellous myth grew up a few years ago in the community where I live, about Land Bill Allen, — a poor old man who in his later years became partly daft, and who convinced himself and nine-tenths of the community that he was the originator and author of the Homestead Bill, with which he had nothing to do except that he formerly made speeches in favor of it, from the



tail of his pedler's cart. A more striking instance of the manner in which a whole community will take up a delusion I have seldom seen.

All these instances may serve to make us careful about accepting as history what everybody says. Be sure of your facts. That is not profitable thinking which rests upon a fiction or a blunder. Hunt down your facts.

5. Remember that a single fact is not sufficient foundation for a large generalization. You often hear people laying down general principles, and when you inquire for the basis upon which these principles rest, you find that some one fact is the sole underpinning of this philosophical superstructure.

Some one tells you with entire confidence that a certain remedy is good for rheumatism. You ask him why he thinks so, and he tells you that he knows; he had the rheumatism and he took the remedy, and it cured him. This may be true. But there are a great many different kinds of rheumatism, — 57 varieties at least, — and the remedy which has cured one form of this

malady might be utterly useless in any other form. No such general statement could be safely made until the remedy had been found effectual in a great many different cases.

There are a great many beliefs which are founded on a very meagre collection of facts. Let us be cautious about forming conclusions in this way. Here is a man who hears some one talking about some social question, — some method of organizing industry, let us say. "It will not work," he says; "I know that it will not work, for I have seen it tried, and it was a failure." Now the single experience to which this man appeals does not settle the case. What he is entitled to say is simply this: "It will not always work; under certain circumstances it will not work; for I have seen it tried once, and it failed. Under other circumstances, I cannot tell what the result would be." After the man had seen it tried a great many times, under a great variety of circumstances, without success, he would be entitled to the opinion that it was not a good method.

The modern method of science is a reason-

ing upon facts. We gather our facts and compare them, and rest our conclusions on them. But in order that our conclusions may have validity they must rest on wide and ample collections of facts. Learning to think is in very large part learning to gather and compare and group and arrange facts in such a way that safe conclusions may be drawn from them.

6. Certain moral conditions are required of those who would learn to think. It is necessary that we should keep our minds as free as possible from passion and prejudice. Our interests, our predilections, our tempers, often cloud our minds and prevent us from apprehending the truth. We find ourselves so strongly wishing to hold this or that opinion that the contrary opinion can scarcely find room in our thought. What is the cure for prejudice? "No other but this," answers Locke, "that every man should let alone other's prejudice and examine his own. Nobody is convinced of his by the accusation of another: he recriminates by the same rule and is clear. The only way to remove this great cause of ignorance and error out of the world is for every one

impartially to examine himself. If others will not deal fairly with their own minds, does that make my errors truth, or ought it to make me in love with them, and willing to impose on myself? . . . Every one declares against blindness, and yet who, almost, is not fond of that which dims his sight and keeps the clear light out of his mind which should lead him into truth and knowledge?"

Let us not forget that one of the indispensable conditions of learning to think, is candor, willingness to know the truth. The prejudice, the party spirit, the sectarian temper, which are so very prevalent, are the great obstacles to sound and clear thinking. The bigot, whether Republican or Democrat, whether Protestant or Catholic, whether believer or agnostic, whether capitalist or trades unionist, whether individualist or Socialist, whose passions are enlisted in behalf of his side and who is determined not to believe anything which contradicts his preconceived opinions, has not learned to think, and never can learn until his temper is changed. He is not a reasonable being; he is simply the slave

of prejudice. Yet I suppose that very few of those who are under this bondage are aware of it. The most abject slaves to prejudice that I have ever known were persons who undoubtedly esteemed themselves to be very open-minded. They were like that New England deacon who is reported to have said, on one occasion, "If I'm wrong, I'm ready to be convinced of it; and I'd like to see the man that can do it!" That religious people are sometimes bigots is a well-known fact; that irreligious people are just as likely to be bigots is not perhaps so well known. But one is quite as apt to encounter an anti-theological bias as a theological bias.

A certain very prominent anti-Christian lecturer, meeting one day a clergyman in the street — of whom he knew nothing except that he was a clergyman — cursed him in good round terms. "Why do you swear at him?" asked his companion. "What has he done to you?" "Nothing," was the answer; "but he and his kind cursed me, to their hearts' content, in former days; now my turn has come, and I'm bound to get even with them." Do you think



that you are likely to be aided in finding out the truth about religion by a man who cannot refrain from cursing a parson if he happens to meet one in the street? No, it is not from the Christians who scorn the infidels and lie about them, and misrepresent them, and will never do justice to them, — nor is it from the unbelievers who are full of spite and ill-will toward the churches and are always more ready to believe evil than good reports concerning them, that we are to gain clear opinions and sound views on this great subject. The trouble with all these people is that they have never learned to think. They are not thinkers, they are partisans, they are haters; their minds are disabled for right thinking.

Those who would learn to think must clear their minds of prejudices and antipathies, and be ready to know the truth. "The inquiry of truth," says Lord Bacon, "which is the love-making or wooing of it, — the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature."

Thinking will be a large part of our busi-



ness every day ; and in order that we may be good employers, good employees, good lawyers, doctors, engineers, editors ; good housekeepers, good wives and mothers, good citizens, good Christians, it is important that we should learn to be good thinkers — clear-headed, sound-minded, fair-minded, reasonable.

And, finally : WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE TRUE, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE HONORABLE, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE JUST, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE PURE, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE LOVELY, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE OF GOOD REPORT, THINK ON THESE THINGS.

## II

### LEARNING TO SPEAK

THE theme of this chapter is closely allied to that of the preceding chapter. Learning to think and learning to express thought cannot be widely separated branches of learning. Whether there can be thought without some kind of expression may be doubted. Thought without vocal or visible expression may of course exist; but there is an old dispute, whether thought can exist apart from words. Apart from written or spoken words it certainly does exist; apart from thought forms, of some kind, it certainly cannot exist. And these thought forms are really words — unspoken words, unspelled words, but *words*, in the deepest sense. I have known a child a little more than two years of age to describe with great particularity an event which happened when she was thirteen months old, which lived in her memory, and which had never been reported till she recalled and reported

it. The words in which she described the event were words which she could not speak when the event occurred; the names of the objects which she enumerated were names that had never been uttered by her lips at that time; but the event had a perfectly clear record in her mind: she had thought about it; she had perceived the objects whose names she could not speak, and their relations to each other; a year afterward, when she had learned to talk, she recalled and described them, and gave her report of what happened. There must have been some thinking done in this case without what we commonly call words; but there were, nevertheless, in the child's mind distinct thought forms, which were retained in the mind to be identified with the words when the child had learned the use of words.

For the most part, however, our thinking is done with words as the instruments of thought. The fact or the object or the process is hardly separated in our minds from the word which describes or symbolizes it. And it is certain that no thought is of any real value to us or to others which has

not found for itself a distinct form in which it may be conveyed to other minds. Clear thought is thought which is ready for expression. The words may not have been uttered in speech or written on paper but they are there in the mind in their proper order, ready to be spoken or written. The pupil who answers his teacher's question by saying, "I know, but I cannot tell," is guilty of a kind of solecism. The thought and the power of expression are never far apart. And it is quite impossible for any one to learn to think without at the same time learning to express thought.

It is not only impossible, it is practically useless. Thought is not intended for solitary enjoyment. We are social beings, made to share our thoughts one with another. There is, doubtless, a kind of knowledge which is best hidden in our own bosoms; there are subjects of thought concerning which we have no need and no right to speak; but in all the highest and widest realms of thought we are not solitary; it is the very condition of sound thinking in all these realms that our minds have fellowship with other minds. The inter-

change of thought corrects and clarifies thought. It is when our thought, given out to others, comes back to us with their comments and qualifications, that we perceive its incompleteness, or its inaccuracy, and are able to reshape it. For our own sakes we need to express our thoughts, that they may be enlarged and purified.

There is, however, in the very act of expressing the thought, if the thought be sound and true, a clearing and confirmation of the thought to our own minds. In putting it in shape so that we can convey it to others we have put it in such shape that we can hold on to it ourselves. The thought which we give away most successfully we keep most surely. This may show us that in dealing with this great interest of thought and expression we depart wholly from the material realm and enter the spiritual realm, where the laws of possession are reversed ; where one is enriched not by what he keeps, but by what he spends. Thought which is hoarded mildews and shrivels ; only the thought which is freely shared with our fellow-men is to ourselves nutritious and precious.



Since, then, the expression of thought is one of the highest functions of the highest life, it becomes a practical question how most clearly to convey our thoughts to others. And since the relation between learning to think and learning to express thought is so close, we might naturally expect to find that maxims which guide us in the one would be applicable in the other. We are not disappointed in this expectation. It is quite as true of learning to express thought as it is of learning to think that practice makes perfect. This is an art that can be learned. The power of clear and effective utterance is a power that may be cultivated. From the time when Demosthenes trained himself to speak by declaiming on the beach, with pebbles in his mouth, — a rude gymnastic, to remove some vocal impediment, — and by reciting as he ran up hill, to gain full control of his breath; trained himself also in the arts of vigorous expression by writing out the history of Thucydides eight times over, — to the time when Abraham Lincoln, lying on the floor, in the light of the fireplace of a frontier cabin in Indiana, pored over the



dictionary and the Kirkham's Grammar, and painfully wrote out and committed to memory long passages from every good book that he could lay his hands upon, — there has been no doubt among thoughtful persons that the art of expression is an art that can be gained by study. There are natural differences of fluency among men; but the natural gift of fluency is generally a fatal gift; the man who talks with the greatest readiness is apt to say the least. He habitually relies upon his power to say something, and thus neglects to furnish himself with anything to say. He who lacks this gift of fluency is more apt to give himself to study and discipline and thus to qualify himself for useful speech.

In studying, now, this art of expression in words I shall not trespass to any considerable extent upon the domain of the rhetorician or the elocutionist. It is not of the formal rules of oratory or of literary utterance that I shall treat, but rather of some of the fundamental requisites, some of the mental and moral conditions of successful expression.

In the first place, then, it would seem

obvious that if language is the instrument of speech, it is quite worth while for one who expects to use this instrument to be familiar with it, to know everything that he can about its structure and its forms, about the origin, the force, the relation of the words that he is using. The study of language to one who wishes to learn how to express thought is just as necessary as is the study of physics to one who wishes to learn how to build bridges, or as is the study of the *materia medica* to one who intends to practise medicine. To all persons whose work is to be in any degree literary — to all who are intending to make language their instrument — to lawyers, journalists, statesmen, preachers, teachers — the study of language is simply indispensable. By every man who wishes to understand the world in which he lives and to have any large measure of influence over his fellows, this study should be highly valued. The ability to express thought clearly and convincingly is a power which never comes amiss. No matter what business you may follow, in what station you may stand, it is a very serviceable qualifi-

cation. In this republican<sup>1</sup> country, where the motive power of government is public opinion, *the ability to help in forming public opinion is greatly to be coveted*; and sound public opinion is formed only by the expression of sound thought on public questions. It is not only or mainly by those who are public writers or speakers that public opinion is formed, but quite as much by those who are able to express themselves cogently and persuasively in private conversation. A good talker makes more converts in the course of the year than many an able orator. The orator speaks professionally; you are more inclined to question and to withhold assent. The orator speaks, also, in a general way; he does not know your precise difficulty; perhaps nothing that he says exactly meets or removes the obstacles which arise in your mind to the truth he is presenting; the talker, if he is good-humored and quick-witted, not only puts himself into sympathetic personal relation with you, but he finds out at once in the conversation what your particular objections are, and does his best to meet and remove them. Indeed, I believe that more

and better work can be done, and probably is done, toward the formation of a sound public opinion, in the conversation of the street and the shop and the club and the dining room, than is done from all the rostrums or by all the newspapers. The power of clear expression is therefore a most valuable acquisition from a patriotic point of view; and it is of service not only to those who expect to follow pursuits which are essentially literary but to every public-spirited citizen. The study of language is not, therefore, superfluous or unimportant to any man or woman. One needs, of course, first to know his own language to its very roots; and because he needs to know it to its roots it is of great service to him to know those languages which *are* its roots.

Let me give you here some words of John Ruskin, one of the greatest masters in this art of expression that the world has known:—

“You might read all the books in the British Museum and remain an utterly ‘illiterate’ uneducated person; but if you read ten pages of a good book letter by letter,

that is to say, with real accuracy, you are for evermore in some measure an educated person. The entire difference between education and non-education (as respects the merely intellectual part of it) consists in this accuracy. A well-educated gentleman may not know many languages — may not be able to speak any but his own, may have read very few books. But whatever language he knows he knows precisely; whatever word he pronounces he pronounces rightly; above all, he is learned in the *peerage* of words; knows the words of true descent and ancient blood at a glance from words of modern *canaillé*; remembers all their ancestry, their intermarriages, distantest relationships, and the extent to which they were admitted and the offices they held among the national *noblesse* of words at any time and in any country. But an uneducated person may know by memory any number of languages, and talk them all, and yet truly know not a word of any — not a word even of his own. . . .

“Now in order to deal with words rightly this is the habit you must form. Nearly every word in your language has been a



word of some other language, — of Saxon, German, French, Latin, or Greek. . . . And many words have been all these; that is to say, have been Greek first, Latin next, French or German next, and English last; undergoing a certain change of sense and use on the lips of each nation; but retaining a deep vital meaning which all good scholars feel in employing them even at this day."

Mr. Ruskin tells us (in "Sesame and Lilies") how, by merely learning the Greek alphabet, we may become amateur etymologists, and be able to track words from one language to another, noting the changing phases of meaning.

Such work as this among the roots of your own language will greatly enrich your vocabulary and invigorate your power of expression. And although, as Mr. Ruskin says, it is not indispensable that you should learn any other language, yet the study of other languages is the best possible drill in learning to express thought. Not merely are these etymological explorations of great service, the work of translation is itself an admirable exercise in



the expression of thought. You have the thought of your writer — generally a great writer — in another language. You must first master that thought — get the precise force of every word ; know why he uses this word instead of that ; why he gives his sentence this turn instead of that ; and then you must find the right English words and the right English idioms to hold and convey the thought. He who wishes to learn to express thought, to gain facility and ease and precision in the use of words, can set for himself no more useful task than the translation of the masterpieces of other languages into lucid and idiomatic English.

Next to the study of language the study of good literature should be named. To read good books—the best books ; to read them, not always with that etymological thoroughness which Mr. Ruskin enjoins, but slowly and carefully, getting the full force of every sentence, and the full significance and beauty of every figure and illustration, — this is a great aid in mastering the art of expression. In such reading one becomes familiar with the action of the strongest and brightest minds, with the

choicest and most telling forms of utterance ; and this familiarity is itself a liberal education.

It will be of great service also to those who wish to perfect themselves in this noble art, if they can form the acquaintance and enjoy the conversation of persons who think, and who are in the habit of expressing thought. There are such persons, and their society is well worth cultivating. An intelligent and serious talker—one who employs his social opportunities in the discussion of themes which are of some importance, who brings from his daily studies and observations questions of current interest or of universal moment which are really worth spending time and breath upon — he is a companion whom you will do well to choose. And, on the other hand, if you do not wish to lose both the power and the relish for clear expression, you had better keep well aloof from those the staple of whose talk is empty gossip and shallow badinage, and whose linguistic vehicle is mainly slang.

There is, now and then, a slang expression which seems to have some point, — which

can be used, on occasion, rather effectively. But the common use of slang tends to the concealment rather than the expression of thought. The habitual user of slang thrusts it in, in every possible and impossible connection; the same word or phrase is made to do duty over and over; in four cases out of five it does not even suggest an intelligible meaning; it is the jargon of an imbecile. I have sometimes taken pains to note and tabulate the different meanings given by the same person to a single slang term which had been picked up and forced into constant use in conversation. Here is the word "jigger," which may or may not be a dictionary word, but when you try to find out, from the use of it by a single person, what it signifies, you learn that it may mean a head-dress — (and that might, indeed, be an appropriate use of it) — or a pencil-case, or an afternoon tea-party, or a musical performance, or a book-rack or an automobile, or anything else that you could think of, from a constellation to a feather-duster. Such a use of language does not, probably, tend to clear thought or accurate expression. I know persons who seem to

have finally lost their power of clear and intelligible speech through their habitual use of slang.

This leads on to the suggestion that those who wish to attain to any real eminence in the art of expression must look out that they have something worth expressing. Patient, thorough, vigorous thinking must be behind all your words, whether written or spoken. Literature that is mere verbiage, no matter how flowery; oratory whose charm consists wholly in mellifluous and well-balanced sentences, are not worth while. There cannot really be any such thing as strong expression without strong thought, any more than there could be a strong oak which was nothing but bark, with no heart of timber; or a strong lion that was nothing but hide and hair, with neither bone nor muscle. I am not saying that the form of the thought is of no consequence; it is of much consequence. "What nonsense it is to say," says Dr. Boyd, "that the effect of anything spoken or written depends on the essential thought alone. Why, nine-tenths of the practical power depends on the way it is put. Somebody has asserted

that any thought which is not eloquent in any words whatever is not eloquent at all. He might as well have said that black was white. Not to speak of the charm of the mere music of gracefully modulated words and felicitously arranged phrases, how much there is in beautifully logical treatment and beautifully clear development that will interest a cultivated man in a speech or treatise quite irrespective of its subject."

Certainly: all this is true. The form is of great consequence, providing that the substance is there, giving life and solidity to the form. But there is sometimes an effort after mere prettiness, — an attempt to string together fine words and fine phrases, without much care for the meaning they contain. I remember schoolmates of mine who were always treasuring up fine sounding words to use in their compositions. The frame of their compositions was made to hang these verbal decorations upon. I sometimes find essays, and sermons, even, which seem to me to have been constructed on the same plan. There is a great effort at expression, but nothing in particular seems to have been expressed.



Let us not be ambitious of this kind of literary achievement. The applause which is won by it is not worth winning.

Finally, let us remember that the great secret of clear expression is sincerity. If your deepest desire is to speak the truth, your utterance will have the beauty and the power which belong to sincere speech. Say the thing that you know, the thing that you heartily believe, and say nothing else. Let all your discipline in speaking or writing be a discipline in truth telling. Don't talk against conviction or without conviction. Don't amuse yourself by trying to see if you cannot make a strong argument for a false position. Don't talk for effect. Don't talk for popularity. Don't talk for victory. Speak the thing that you have found to be true, in your own experience, or the thing which, with the best light you can get, you believe to be true.

I am sure that great harm is done, in school debates and oratorical contests, by speaking to please or speaking to win, — when no conviction finds utterance. Not many days ago I had a letter from a lad whom I do not know and never heard of,



who lives in a distant part of the state, saying that he was about to take part in an oratorical contest, and asking me if I would suggest to him a subject, "*one that would be likely to be popular with the judges.*" What answer should I have made to him? I do not suppose that the lad was different from ordinary students; his idea was that the object of speaking in a college contest is victory. Well, that motive is not likely to be kept wholly out of sight, I dare say; yet is it not, when you come to think of it, something of a degradation of the noble gift of speech to employ it for such purposes? So it seemed to me, and I told the boy, as kindly as I could, something like this, which I earnestly commend to the consideration of those who wish to learn to speak.

"I cannot give you a theme for an oration. I do not know you at all; what you are qualified to write about I cannot even guess. If there is any subject that you know something about and are interested in, write about that; if there is not any such subject, don't write at all. Speak of what you know, and testify of that which you have seen.

“In the second place, if your main object in speaking is to please the judges and win the victory, you ought to fail, and you probably will. Speech of this sort has no heart in it, no life in it, no power in it; it is mere oratorical gymnastic; I could tell, if I were a judge, that that was the purpose of the speaker; and the insincerity would offend and disgust me more than any possible blunder in elocution could.

“Write your oration, not to please the judges, but to express and enforce some truth which in the bottom of your heart you believe; go before the audience and banish the judges and your competitors from your mind, or think of them only as men in the audience into whose hearts you want to drive this one truth, — whom you want to convince and persuade; let your speech go straight from your soul into the souls of the people before you, with the directness of light and the penetration of fire, and let that content you. Such speaking as that is noble speaking, effective speaking; it is the best speaking you or any man can do; indeed, there is no other kind of speaking that is anything better than sounding brass

or a tinkling cymbal. Whether you are to win or lose by it is a small matter ; only win for yourself in your speaking the consciousness of a noble sincerity, and leave your hearers with the conviction that your words are true."

### III

## LEARNING TO SEE

WHEN I sat down at my table to begin the writing of this chapter, a newspaper lay before me. I tore off the wrapper, and upon the title page, within the decorated border, in the space reserved for some great saying of some great teacher, I found these words of John Ruskin:—

“THE MORE I THINK OF IT THE MORE I FIND THIS CONCLUSION IMPRESSED UPON ME, THAT THE GREATEST THING A HUMAN SOUL EVER DOES IN THIS WORLD IS TO SEE SOMETHING AND TELL WHAT IT SAW IN A PLAIN WAY. HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE CAN TALK FOR ONE WHO CAN THINK, BUT THOUSANDS CAN THINK FOR ONE WHO CAN SEE.”

You are not always to take your John Ruskin literally, any more than you are to take your Bible always literally; but you get his meaning here. And it is a good send-off that he gives us in our discussion

of this great art of learning to see. Doubtless this chapter would come logically as the first of the series; for seeing naturally comes before thinking or talking; it is the harvest of the eye that the mind garners and the lips dispense; but the order matters not greatly. Perhaps the impressions that we have gained of the importance of learning to think and to express thought may prepare us to appreciate the importance of learning to see.

That seeing is in any sense an art has not, I dare say, entered the minds of some of us. Seeing, we may have imagined, is a purely organic process, a matter with which the judgment and the volition of the mind behind the eyes have nothing to do. "Anybody who has eyes must see," it may be said, "unless indeed there is some optical defect in the eye. The vision falls on the retina and is reported to the brain; the brain has no choice about taking the impression; you must see, if you have eyes." "A great physiologist said to me the other day," says John Ruskin, "that sight was 'altogether mechanical.' The words simply meant, if they meant anything, that all his



physiology had never taught him the difference between eyes and telescopes. Sight is an absolutely spiritual phenomenon, accurately and only to be so defined; and the 'Let there be light' is as much, when you understand it, the ordering of intelligence as the ordering of vision." This emphatic word of the great critic may serve to arrest the judgment of those who think that our theme is a misnomer. What we call seeing is far more a mental than a physical operation. Listen to these words of a master in philosophy. They are quoted from John Bascom's "Principles of Psychology."

"The purely intellectual character of sight, the extent to which the eye is a simple, unconscious, translucent medium of the mind, is shown by the number, delicacy, variety, and furtive character of the judgments inextricably involved in vision. The earlier years of life are evidently busily employed in learning to see, not in the scientific but in the familiar sense of the word. Only objects of special brilliancy, or near at hand, or united with sounds, are able to arrest and hold the eye of the infant. Slowly does it learn to distinguish the

mother's face when at a distance, or to give direction to the eye or separation to objects except as one or other of them is forced obtrusively on the attention. These facts harmonize with the further recorded fact that the eyes of one couched in mature life seemed to report all objects under the analogy of touch; that is, as directly in contact with the object of vision. These spaces, greater or less, which the educated eye now reveals; the opening up and spreading out of the universe before it; this unsearchable depth, this height, this breadth, are not the products of direct vision, but of vision modified by innumerable judgments and mingled with them. The most of them we form unconsciously, and learned to make early in life, their accuracy and ease being increased by every day's experiences. How many things come in to determine our estimates of the distance of surrounding objects, — the clearness or faintness of colors, the depth of blue cast upon them by the atmosphere, their apparent size, intervening objects, and the muscular adjustment of the eyes in their perception. The nearness or remote-

ness of objects is exclusively determined by these considerations and is not at all a matter of direct sight. . . . The relative position and size of objects are also almost wholly a matter of judgment; the eye itself only records the angular separation. It reduces them to a map surface, and leaves their dimensions and distances unrecorded.

“Angles, not lines, are contemplated by it. The distances outward from the eye, and hence laterally also, are wholly a matter of conjecture, of experience.”

Some philosophers dispute this doctrine; they say that we do have a direct perception of distance; that the little baby with his first look, perceives that the window is farther off than the curtain of his crib; that all objects do not present themselves to him in one plane, but that he immediately perceives a difference in distances. It is not necessary for us to settle this dispute of the psychologists; the facts upon which they are agreed are sufficient for our purposes. These facts are that the eye sees nothing; that the eye is an optical instrument, as much as the field-glass is; that the mind simply uses the eye as its organ,

and that whether or not it is true that some of the primary ideas of form are directly conveyed to the mind by this sense, it is certain that the ideas thus conveyed are very rudimentary, and imperfect, and that it is only by experience that the mind learns to judge of the relative positions and distances of bodies.

That we do not intuitively perceive distances and forms is evident from the fact that the quickest sighted of us are so often deceived about them. When the conditions of sight change, our judgments are often greatly at fault. I stood one morning about sunrise on the ridge of the Groner Grat in Switzerland looking at the magnificent panorama of mountains and icefields round about me; and it seemed as if the mountain walls of the gigantic amphitheatre, from whose arena I was looking, were only two or three miles off; Monte Rosa, The Matterhorn, the Weisshorn, the Deut Blanche, the Mischabelhörner,—all of them seemed only an easy hour's walk away, yet the nearest of them was eight or ten miles distant. So absolutely transparent was the atmosphere, and so few intervening objects

were there to assist the vision, that the judgment was utterly disabled in estimating the distances. The same illusion is common with travellers when they first see the distant peaks of the Rocky Mountains through the pellucid atmosphere. Mountains that are twenty miles away seem only four or five.

And not only do we often find ourselves at fault in judging distances, — our sense is easily imposed upon in the matter of form. In one of the chambers of the royal palace at Amsterdam, on my last visit the guide called our attention to a group of marble statuettes in full relief, in a deep niche just over one of the doors through which we were about to pass. They were certainly, we said, as beautiful specimens of the art of sculpture as we had ever seen. White marble was never more delicately wrought. When we passed through the door the guide bade us look up at them, and we found that the niche and the statuettes were oil paintings on a flat wall. We thought our eyes well practised in judging artistic forms, but this artist had completely deceived us.

You have found it difficult, sometimes,



as you entered the room in which a well-painted cyclorama, like the Battle of Gettysburg, was on exhibition, to realize that the colors and forms on which your eyes were resting were not thirty feet from the spot where you were standing; the art of the painter made them seem to be miles away. All this experience certainly shows that sight is not a matter of intuition, for intuitions are unerring, but a matter of experience and judgment. Experience may be corrected; judgment may be cultivated. We can never become so perfectly trained that optical illusions may not deceive us, but we may so educate our sense of sight that we shall be able to see very distinctly and to discriminate very sharply. And the beginning of wisdom in this matter is to realize that the sense can be educated; that we can learn to see. Most men content themselves with such training as they get in the first two or three years of their lives — with the unconscious education of infancy. Others train their eyes in certain directions — they are specialists in sight, like the watchmaker, who learns to see and thus to handle very minute pieces of

machinery ; or the iron refiner, who learns to judge by the color of the molten metal exactly when his processes of manipulation must be introduced ; or the seaman, who can descry a sail upon the horizon that no landsman is likely to see ; or the hunter, whose quick eye detects through the foliage the form of his game when the unpractised vision sees nothing but leaves and branches. All these instances of seeing specialists show the power that may be gained by training the sight, by learning to see. Whether the organ itself can be improved by using it, as the muscles of the arm are strengthened by using them, I cannot say ; but practice enables one to fix the vision more intently upon the object, and to separate it more perfectly from surrounding objects, and to estimate more accurately what it is from the shadings and gradations of color which it presents. Practice makes perfect in seeing, as well as in every other art.

Let me suggest, then, one or two practical maxims for guidance in learning to see.

1. The principle which we have found underlying the other arts does not fail us

here. As we learn to think by thinking and to speak by speaking, so we learn to see by seeing, by trusting our sense and using it ; by calling upon it to serve us, and expecting good and accurate work from it. It is part of a good education to learn to see true. The good mechanic is a man whose eye is true ; who can tell at a glance whether an edge is straight, whether a joint is perfect. Learning almost any mechanical trade is very largely learning to see accurately. And there is moral education in this. Truth is truth, whether of vision or of speech ; no man can tell the truth respecting those matters in which his sight is not true ; if he undertakes to talk about them, he blunders ; and his inaccuracy in respect to them affects, to some extent, his whole character. A true eye, mechanically, is not only a very useful member of the body ; it helps to keep the mind true ; it corroborates truth of character. This is a good reason for the introduction of manual training into schools. The mechanical advantages may be slight, but the moral gains are considerable. I know some preachers who would be better preachers than they

are if they had learned, in school, to make from drawings, a few simple articles of pine wood. If they had been required to make a mitre joint or a dovetail joint, or a tenon and mortise — and to keep making them until the eye testified that they were reasonably perfect, they would have had a lesson in accuracy that might have kept them from some of the slovenly and unveracious statements which they are quite apt to make, from the utterance of propositions that do not match within a mile, and that are true to no rule in heaven or on earth.

The art of seeing is the foundation of a great many of our smaller accomplishments. Reading music is to a considerable extent learning to see. Learning to spell is learning to see. The good speller is one who knows words by sight. You know the face of your friend by sight. If the face of your friend were distorted, and one eye were missing, or the nose were where the mouth ought to be, you would know it. So does the man with accurate eyes know the face of a word, and knows when its features are all there and in the right places. I marvel,

sometimes, that people who are fairly intelligent — people who are constant readers — should look into the faces of the commonest words of the language a thousand times a day, as they often do, and then, when they take a pen in their hands, always misspell them. If they had learned to see, they would not do it.

2. Learning to see is learning what is worth seeing. A vast number of impressions are made every day upon the retina of the eye; we cannot be said to see them all because of many of them the mind makes no record; we do not "notice" them, as we say. It is only the objects on which we fix our attention that we can be said to see. The mind makes its selection among these visual impressions. And by our mental tastes and habits our sight is guided.

The archæologist picks up an arrow-head or a stone hatchet when you did not see anything but a pile of stones; the botanist finds a rare *ranunculus* in a field when you saw nothing but yellow posies; each sees the things that he is interested in.

One is often impressed by the habits of those whom he meets in the streets, in



respect of the use of their eyes. They are often interested in one another in certain ways. You see one woman taking in another with the most comprehensive and searching gaze, and turning around after she has passed to get the retrospect as well as the prospect. What has she seen? Clothes, nothing more. It is all she has eyes to see. One's mind may be so full of clothes that there shall be no vision for anything else. Such eyes are not well educated.

People are worth seeing. The human face, the human form, the revelations of character, of personality, that are made in the countenance, in the posture, in the movements of the body — all these are full of interest to the careful and sympathetic observer. It is not the beautiful faces that are best worth scanning; many of them are characterless; many that are very homely attract us by their seriousness, their sadness, their honesty, their strength, their individuality. Probably nothing else is presented to our sight in which we may learn so much as from the human face, if we have vision clarified by large experi-

ence and purged by sympathy, so that we can read with kindly wisdom the lessons of warning, of compassion, of inspiration which the faces that we daily meet have to tell us.

3. Learning to draw is, mainly, learning to see, and this is a great reason for the study of art in our schools. In the study of art one comes to observe the visual relation of things, — the lines and the curves which form the outline of an object; the disposition of light and shade; the gradations of tint, the blendings of color; in a thousand ways his sight is sharpened and he is taught to notice the beauties of color in the world about him. The advantage of this, to any man, is beyond computation. If it does not, as we sometimes say, add a sixth sense, it doubles the value of one of the senses, the sense of sight. Therefore it is well worth while for those who have no intention of following art as a profession, to study art in school. Art is the interpretation of nature and of life, and some knowledge of it assists you greatly in being your own interpreter.

I speak of this, not as one who has proved the value of such training, but as one who has all his life deplored the lack of it. I

know, by my companionship with those who have enjoyed it, how much more the world means to them than to me.

4. This brings me to say that the fine art of seeing is of value to us chiefly because it enables us to enjoy the wonderful and the beautiful world in which we live, — the marvels of crystalline form and organic function, the glories of earth and sea and sky.

“Man’s use and function,” says John Ruskin,<sup>1</sup> “. . . is to be the witness of the glory of God, and to advance that glory by his reasonable obedience and resultant happiness.

“Whatever enables us to fulfil this function is in the pure and first sense of the word useful to us. Preëminently, therefore, whatever sets the glory of God more brightly before us. But things that only help us to exist are in a secondary and mean sense useful, or rather, if they be looked for alone they are useless, and worse, for it would be

<sup>1</sup> It is part of my religion to bring the noble eloquence of this great teacher, as often as I can, before the readers of this generation. I fear that most of them do not know him so well as they ought.

better that we should not exist than that we should guiltily disappoint the purposes of existence.

“And yet people speak in this working age, when they speak from their hearts, as if houses and land and food and raiment were alone useful, and as if sight, thought, and admiration were all profitless, so that men insolently call themselves Utilitarians, who would turn, if they had their way, themselves and their race into vegetables; men who think, as far as such can be said to think, that the meat is more than the life and the raiment than the body; who look to the earth as a stable and to its food as fodder; vinedressers and husbandmen who love the corn they grind and the grapes they crush better than the gardens of the angels upon the slopes of Eden; hewers of wood and drawers of water, who think that the wood they hew and the water they draw are better than the pine forests that cover the mountains like the shadow of God, and than the great rivers that flow like his eternity. And so comes upon us that woe of the preacher, that though God hath made everything beautiful in its season,

also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end."

Surely it is not a seemly thing that we should walk daily through a world that is full of the glory of God and see so little of it all. If to be witnesses of his glory is one main purpose for which you were made, what use are you making of your eyes?

It is often strange and sad to note the utter insensibility of those who live amid the most wonderful manifestations of natural beauty and sublimity to all that is round about them. "And these people see all this every day!" said an impulsive young girl as we passed some peasants' huts on the shores of the Vierwaldstätter Sea, in one of the most beautiful portions of Switzerland. Yes, they see it all every day, but seeing they see and do not perceive. There is no splendor for them in these scenes; they find no pleasure in them. Listen again to our Master in this art, John Ruskin. It would be the height of presumption to give you my words here, when his are accessible:—



“The traveller on his happy journey, as his foot springs from the deep turf, and strikes the pebbles gaily over the edge of this mountain road, sees, with a glance of delight, the clusters of nut-brown cottages that nestle among these sloping orchards, and glow beneath the boughs of the pines. Here, it may well seem to him, if there be sometimes hardship, there must be at least innocence and peace, and fellowship of the human soul with nature. It is not so. The wild goats that leap along these rocks have as much possession of joy in all that fair work of God as the men that toil among them. Perhaps more. Enter the street of one of those villages and you will find it foul with that gloomy foulness that is suffered only by torpor or by anguish of soul. Here it is torpor — not absolute suffering — not starvation or disease, but darkness of calm enduring; the spring known only as the time of the scythe, and the autumn as the time of the sickle, and the sun only as a warmth, the wind as a chill, and the mountains as a danger. They do not understand so much as the name of beauty or of knowledge. They understand

dimly that of virtue. Love, patience, hospitality, faith,—these things they know. To glean their meadows side by side, so happier; to bear the burden up the breathless mountain flank uncomplainingly; to bid the stranger drink from their vessel of milk; to see at the foot of their low deathbeds a figure upon a cross, dying also, patiently; in this they are different from the cattle and the stones, but in all this are unrewarded as far as concerns the present life. For them there is neither hope nor passion of spirit; for them neither advance nor exultation. Black bread, rude roof, dark night, laborious day, weary arm at sunset, and life ebbs away. No books, no thoughts, no attainments, no rest; except only a little sitting in the sun under the church wall, as the bell tolls thin and far in the mountain air; a pattering of a few prayers not understood by the altar rails of the dimly gilded chapel, and so back to the sombre home with the cloud upon them still unbroken."

This must not be thought a true picture of all Switzers; there are fertile valleys and wide spaces in that little land in which the

people live a freer and larger life ; but of the mountaineers, so far as I have seen them, it appears to be a true picture. And it shows how little the environment has to do with awakening in the soul of man the love of material beauty. It by no means follows that if you live in the midst of natural beauty you will have an eye for it, and a high appreciation of it ; you must be trained to see it.

Remember, then, that if we are to be witnesses, in this world, to the glory of God, we must train ourselves to discover and discern it. There is no royal road in this or any other art ; you learn to see by seeing. If you wish to learn to take delight in the beauty of the world, you must give your attention to it ; you must make room for it in your thought and life ; you must look at it, and keep looking ; it will discover its loveliness to you if you are intimate enough with it. The man who gives his attention for years to horses can discern the beauty of a horse ; no horse passes him on the street whose points he does not narrowly and critically observe. The man who gives his attention for years to cravats and waist-

coats is a connoisseur in these things; he observes the dress of every man he meets. And it is quite as possible to form the habit of observing the beauty of grass and flowers, of delicate leaf and branching foliage, of cloud piles, and blue distances, of winding streams and willows by the watercourses. You can see these things if you think them worth looking at, worth giving attention to; and when you have formed the habit of seeing them, life will have a new meaning for you; you will never be without occupation or solace; perennial sources of the purest pleasure will be open to you; the heavens will declare to you the glory of God, and the firmament will show you his handiwork; day unto day will utter in your ear inspiring speech, and night unto night will show you knowledge of the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

## IV

### LEARNING TO HEAR

“HE that hath ears to hear, let him hear,” said Jesus. The saying is more than once repeated. It seems to be intimated that a man may have ears which are not for the purpose of hearing. To what other purpose ears could be devoted I do not know; perhaps they might be regarded as ornamental appendages — as convenient brackets on which jewels and pendants might be hung. The irony of the proverb is apparent enough. If ears are for hearing, use them for that purpose.

The suggestion is that there is much defective hearing; that hearing, like seeing, is an art that can be learned, and that there are great differences among us, not only with respect to the natural quickness or sensitiveness to impressions of the auditory organs, but also with respect to the manner



in which the intellectual powers are trained to deal with these impressions. There are right and wrong ways of hearing; there is good and bad hearing; there is clear and confused hearing; there is sharp and dull hearing: and this is the result not merely of natural endowment, but also of cultivation, of education. "Take heed how ye hear," says Jesus in another place. His injunction refers to the attitude of the mind before spiritual truth; but the fact is assumed; the attitude of the mind before all appeals to it through the auditory nerves is one over which we have power.

We may say of hearing precisely what may be said of seeing, that it is not an instinctive or intuitive process but an operation in which experience and practice make perfect. "The ear," says Professor Bascom, "is akin to the eye, though considerably below it, in the number of judgments its habitual use involves. The direction, distance, and source of sounds are plainly learned by experience; though in most cases we hardly separate the mere phenomenal fact from the judgments on which our knowledge, our conclusions, depend."

If the question be asked which of these portals of sense is superior in rank and dignity, the common judgment would name the eye with no hesitation. That judgment is probably sound, but the case is not so clear as at first it may seem. Most of us would unhesitatingly say that if we must be deprived of either sense we would far rather lose our hearing than our sight. So far as the problems of self-maintenance and self-direction are concerned, that choice would be wise. A deaf man who can see is less dependent on others for the supply of his physical needs than a blind man who can hear. But so far as the intellectual and moral needs are concerned, his advantages are less obvious. To be deprived of all that enters the life through the eye is a great privation indeed. Never to behold the kindly light of the sun and the stars; never to know anything of the æsthetic delights awakened in the mind by forms and colors, by light and shade; never to enjoy the glory of the clouds or the majesty of the mountains or the plumage of the birds or the soft green of the meadows or the beauty of the flowers; never to see the smile upon

your mother's face or the yearning tenderness in the eye of the one who loves you best — all this is, indeed, a loss unspeakable.

But what would it be to miss from your life all that has found entrance through the portal of the ear? How many suggestions, how many pleasures have been conveyed to you by the sounds of nature, — by the whispering of the winds, by the rippling of the waters, by the reverberation of the thunder, by the hum of the bees, by the songs of the birds, by the various voices of our humbler fellow-creatures! How much the world — the natural world — means to you that it could not mean if the portals of the ear had always been closed!

Then there is the great realm of music, with all its delights, its inspirations, its enkindling appeals, its powerful influence over our emotional and spiritual natures; of how much would our lives be bereft if music were to us a meaningless word!

Not for impressions or emotional delights alone does the ear afford the gateway, but for knowledge also. How much of all that we know has come to us through the ear! In the first five or six years of our lives by

far the largest part of our education takes this avenue; we learn our mother tongue by the ear, not by the eye; all the large gains of fundamental knowledge concerning common things and common relations are thus communicated. Through all our lives the same process continues. What we hear, in the conversation of the home or the street or the playground or the shop, — what we hear in school, from teachers and pupils pursuing the same or other studies, what we hear in the Sunday school, and from the pulpit and the platform and the rostrum, makes up by far the largest share of our information, our knowledge, the materials of our education.

Above all, it is through the ear that the deepest impressions are made upon our moral natures. The tones of the human voice, in warning, reproving, inviting, persuading, encouraging, cheering, comforting, pleading, — what a mighty influence they have had over the lives of all of us! How different might our characters be, how different would be the sum of our experiences if all that has been borne into our souls by the voices of father and mother,

of brother and sister and child, of husband or wife, of sweetheart or lover, had never entered into our spiritual store. The harvest of the ear is larger probably than any of us is able to conceive.

One thing is significant — the message of the divine Love to man chooses first this channel of communication. It is a *Word* of Life, a Gospel, which is spoken and heard. It may, indeed, be committed to writing, but that is a secondary and altogether subordinate method of propagating it. Jesus himself wrote never a word. The entire impression made by him as a teacher upon the minds and hearts of men was made by his spoken words. Those whom he thus taught and inspired were bidden by him to adopt the same method — to go forth repeating in the ears of their fellow-men the good news that they had heard — to go forth preaching the Gospel. There is no command to write or print the good news; the order is to tell it. This is not any reason why we should not call to our aid the printed page; no reason why the gospel should not be written and published; we have a right to avail ourselves of every



method of communication; but the fact remains that the method of Jesus himself was the method of oral teaching; he reached men's minds and hearts through their ears, and, no matter what other methods may be invented, this one will always be the first and most effective. Many and many are the deep things of God which can be told, but which never can be printed. The love, the sympathy, the tenderness, the pity, the awakening and quickening power which the voice is able to convey, form a most essential and vital element in the gospel, and it cannot be conveyed to human hearts by means of the printed page. There are persons who conceive that the day is coming when the function of the preacher will be obsolete; when religious instruction and inspiration will all be given by means of books and newspapers; when we shall sit down in our homes and read essays and sermons and homilies instead of going to church to listen to the living voice. That day will not come until we have learned to stay at home and read with our eyes the printed notes of song or chorus or oratorio or symphony, instead

of going to the music hall to hear them. What the voice can alone convey, what the ear can alone receive of the deep things of the spirit, is an element so personal, so vital, so precious that it is quite impossible for us to conceive that we shall ever be able to dispense with it.

I have lived for many years in close neighborhood to the two Ohio institutions for the blind and the deaf, and it has enabled me to observe the difference between the intellectual and affectional development of blind children and that of deaf children. The children who come from ordinary homes to the school for the blind are far more advanced intellectually and morally, at the age of seven or eight years, than those who came from the same kind of homes to the school for the deaf. The blind boy knows perfectly a great many of the most important things about the world in which he lives, about the moral and spiritual realities, about domestic and social relations, of which the deaf boy has only the faintest knowledge. Both boys learn many things which are of the greatest use to them, during their courses of study; the

deaf boy far more respecting handicrafts and practical life and the material world in which he lives; the blind boy far more of the things of the spirit, of the deeper significance of life. To him all the sounds of nature have become interesting and significant; his ear has become vigilant also to catch the spoken word; its content he grasps and holds more firmly than most of us; he has become a good listener, an accurate hearer; he has learned to treasure what he hears; much of the great literature has entered into his life and become part of him; music has become to him, not always, but very often, a wonderful solace and inspiration; his emotional nature has thus been deeply stirred and his spiritual aspirations have been enkindled. All this has come to him through the ear. He has learned to hear.

While, therefore, none of us can be too thankful for the sense of sight, or too compassionate towards those who are deprived of it, yet it is well for us to recognize the fact that very large revenues of good may come into the life through these other portals, and to put the proper value upon

them. It is quite worth while for those of us who have two good eyes and who have learned to use them, to become aware of the fact that our ears are also the servants of our understanding, and that learning to hear is not less important than learning to see.

The function of hearing in its relation to the development of our mental and spiritual powers is an interesting theme. I can give but a few practical suggestions respecting the art of hearing well.

1. The first and most obvious maxim calls back our minds to the importance of attention. In learning to hear as in learning to think and in learning to see, the power of concentrating our mind upon that which we want to hear, — of excluding other sounds from our thought and attending strictly to the sounds which are conveying to the mind the ideas with which we are immediately concerned — this is the first thing to learn. Almost always, when we are engaged in listening, other sounds than those to which we ought to attend are audible to us. You are sitting in the recitation room listening to the teacher explain-

ing the subject you are studying, and many other sounds are brought by the waves of air to your ears. Perhaps some one is whispering near you, or rattling a slate, or turning over leaves; perhaps there are noises of footsteps in the hall; perhaps a class is singing in another room; perhaps there are noises in the street — the rumbling of wheels, the barking of a dog, the cries of pedlers; the question with you is whether you can exclude or ignore all these other confusing and distracting noises and fasten your thought upon the business before you. Hearing well, you see, is not a passive process, but a very active exercise; it calls for the vigorous control by the will of the mind's powers. One can cultivate this power of concentration in hearing, as in anything else, and it is a valuable acquisition.

The telegrapher's business is largely learning to hear. The click and clatter of a number of instruments all going at once is to you and me very distracting, but to the expert telegrapher there is no confusion. He knows at once when his office is called; those rattling magnets have a clear message



for him ; some operator on the line is talking to him ; you see him smile at a pleasantry ; with his right hand he clicks away the answer. How such a chaotic jargon of metallic raps can convey ideas to any mind we cannot understand ; it is the result of many patient and painful lessons in the art of learning to hear.

There is a great deal of clumsy and inadequate hearing in this world, most of which is due to no defect of the organs of hearing, but to lack of attention. People listen with their ears but not with their minds ; they get only a fraction of what is said : their heedlessness often makes great trouble for themselves and others. One who has directions, orders, notices to give, is often surprised at the number of those who will fail to get them accurately in the mind, no matter how explicitly and clearly they may be given. You have sometimes played the parlor game — gossip, I think they call it — which consists of whispering a sentence in the ear of your next neighbor and letting him repeat it in the same way to the one next him, and so on round the circle ; if it is a large circle,

it is often amusing to see what transformations will take place in a simple sentence before it gets back to the place from which it started. This is partly due to the failure of memory, but it is also the result in part of clumsy and inaccurate hearing.

A considerable part of the life of every intelligent person is spent in listening to speech of one sort or another, — sermons, addresses, lectures, essays, reports, arguments, — and the ability to hear accurately, to take the thought presented through the ear completely into the mind, is a kind of ability which we all need to cultivate. There are vast differences, of course, in the speakers to whom we listen; some speak clearly, and interestingly, with such perspicuity and logical coherency that their thought can be easily seized and followed; with such pleasantness, also, of voice and utterance that it is a delight to listen; and others are the reverse of all this, so that it is hard to fix the mind on what they say and to follow them. There are many poor speakers, but there are also many poor listeners. It would be a great gain if the speakers would all learn to speak well, but

it would be an even greater gain if the hearers would all learn to listen well. You help the speaker amazingly, whether he is teacher, professor, lecturer, or preacher, if you listen well, with eyes and ears attent; you hinder and discourage him greatly if the wandering eye and the averted face and the vacant look show him that your wits are wool-gathering, that you are not attending to what is said. There would be much better speaking if there were better hearing.

Your own gains, also, will be vastly greater, if you cultivate this habit of strict attention when you are listening to that which is worth hearing.

2. The importance of selection in the exercise of this function is also to be noted. A great many things strike upon your ear every day to which you will do well to pay no attention; it will be better for you to let them pass by you as the idle wind. An intelligent gentleman whom I met in England, who had become so deaf that it was difficult to converse with him, replied, when I expressed my sympathy with him in this privation: "Oh, I don't know; there

are compensations. Many times it is a great advantage to be unable to hear. The gossip all gets by me. The small talk doesn't afflict me. People will not shout such things in your ear. The loss of hearing is a great loss, but I make the most of my gains." What we have to do is voluntarily to exclude from our minds all this idle and useless communication from which my friend was happy to be delivered. Learning to hear is not only learning to attend to what is worth hearing, but also to turn a deaf ear to what is not worth hearing.

3. It is well worth while for those of us who can sometimes get away into the woods and the fields, or into the parks and groves in the summer time, or even to sit on our own porches in the summer days, to learn to hear with intelligence the voices of nature, and especially the vocal calls of the living things that inhabit the forests and the hedges and the trees and the grasses. They are all our fellow-creatures, and they have something to say to us to which we may well attend. The saucy chatter of the red squirrel, the cluck of the marmot, the boom of the bumblebee, multitudinous

voices of the swamp at eventide, — all these may arrest our attention. Above all, the voices of the birds appeal to us, there is a charm in their song which we cannot afford to ignore. And it is well to get acquainted with them, to know them by their voices, to be able as you sit in the grove or the orchard or on the meadow bank in the morning to distinguish the dashing melody of the oriole, and the bright little ditty of the song sparrow, and the rollicking sauciness of the catbird, and the sparkling scherzo of the bobolink, and the happy little quiz of the red-eyed vireo, and the cheer, cheer, cheer, of the cardinal, and the splendid aria of the brown thrasher, and the gleeful peal of the flicker, and the seraphic song of the hermit thrush. Well worth knowing are these little neighbors of ours; and if our ears are trained to catch their distinctive notes, and if we are able to listen with the understanding also when they sing, something very pure and perfect will be added to the resources of our lives.

4. If any man have ears to hear let him learn to hear music. That is a kind of hearing which can be learned. Music is



feeling finding utterance in melodious sound and expressed in beautiful form. The laws of this beauty are as definite as the laws of mathematics; and it is only those who discern, whether by intuition or by study, the intellectual elements which enter into the structure of the music who fully enjoy it. As M. Daniel Gregory Mason has written: "A thoroughgoing love of music, . . . must include an appreciation of all its aspects; and since beauty of form is not only delightful in itself but is a potent means of expression as well, insensibility to it involves the loss of much of what is most precious in music. It is necessary, then, to train the attention, to listen accurately as well as sympathetically, to grasp the thematic phrases as they occur, to remember them when they recur, and to follow them through all their transformations. We should think that man but slightly appreciative of poetry who, after hearing a play of Shakespeare, should say that the words seemed to him mellifluous and that many passages moved him, but that he had not the slightest idea what it was all about. Yet how many of us, often hearing a

Beethoven symphony, have the slightest definite idea what it is about. If we would get more than transient, profitless titillation from music, we must cultivate our attention, learning — to borrow a phrase from optics — to make the image sharp. As we progress in that faculty, we shall constantly see new beauties, which in turn will react to deepen expression; and if we are so fortunate as to have a nature sensitive, tender, and earnest, fitted to fill the best kind of emotion that can be aroused by sound, we may hope to gain eventually an accurate, intelligent, and deep appreciation of music."

All this is good reason for studying music, — for studying it patiently and thoroughly, — that so we may learn not only — perhaps not chiefly — to make it, but to hear it. Just as learning to draw and to paint are useful in teaching us to see the beauty which presents itself to the eye, so learning music finds its reward in teaching us to hear the beauty which addresses the ear.

5. It is obvious that hearing is essentially an exercise of the spiritual nature. It is the reaction of the higher intelligence upon the impressions made by the sound waves

upon the auditory organs. The ear is an instrument, as truly as is the ear trumpet which the deaf man uses ; it is the mind, the soul behind it, which hears. And the hearing is perfected through the perfection of the spiritual nature.

One does not wonder, therefore, that in the analogies which the Bible employs to describe the communication to us of divine truth this faculty is the one most appealed to. When the prophets and the poets of the Sacred Book wish to tell us of the divine influence over our minds they almost always represent God as speaking to us, and call on us to hear his word, to listen for his voice. It is not to the eye or any of the other senses that they conceive God as addressing himself ; it is to the ear. "I will hear," says the Psalmist, "what God the Lord will speak." Often and often men are reproved for not hearkening to the voice of the Lord. It is a figure of speech, as we all know. There is no voice audible to the physical ear. But the same attitude of the mind is called for as that in which we listen to wise speech or sweet music, — a receptive, attentive attitude. Such communications as

these are for all of us. Socrates had them, continually, as he testifies; there was a voice whose admonitions he never failed to hear when he needed guidance. Multitudes of men and women in all the ages have learned to hear the same voice; to multitudes to-day it is a most real and precious experience. There are favorable seasons, a modern writer tells us, when "the outside world, with all its current of daily events, is barred out, and one goes into the silent sanctuary of the inner temple of soul to commune and aspire. The spiritual hearing becomes delicately sensitive, so that the 'still small voice' is audible, the tumultuous waves of external sense are hushed, and there is a great calm. The ego gradually becomes conscious that it is face to face with the Divine Presence; that mighty healing, loving, fatherly life which is nearer to us than we are to ourselves. There is soul contact with the Parent Soul, and an influx of life, love, virtue, health and happiness from the Inexhaustible Fountain."

Learning to hear, in this way, what the Father of our Spirits has to say to us, is the beginning of the highest wisdom and the purest happiness.

## V

### LEARNING TO GIVE

THE art of giving is an integral part of the art of living. At the heart of nature this secret is disclosed — that the spring of all life is found not in absorption, but in communion; not in hoarding, but in sharing: —

“Forever the sun is pouring his gold  
On a thousand fields that beg and borrow;  
His warmth he squanders on summits cold,  
His wealth on the homes of want and sorrow;  
To withhold his largess of precious light,  
Is to bury himself in eternal night;  
To give is to live.”

The very source and fount of day lives by what it gives. It is the law of all life. The foundation of all happiness is in giving. That it is more blessed to give than to receive is not a paradox, it is an axiom; there is no truth of character or of nature more nearly fundamental.



It is not our habit, I fear, so to regard it. Practical suggestions about the conduct of life are not apt to emphasize it. Young people get plenty of counsel about forming habits of industry and habits of thrift and habits of observation, and habits of study, and habits of courtesy; but I do not recall any treatise which lays stress on habits of benevolence, albeit benevolence is the essence of all virtue and the source of all blessedness.

The explanation may be found in the fact that the habit-forming period is one in which the ordinary resources of benevolence are small. "There's not much use," it might be said, "to preach to them about benevolence. Wait till they get something to give; it will be time enough then to learn the art of giving."

This is one of the fatal mistakes. People are always waiting to learn wisdom, until the time to learn it is past. It is just the same with the contrasted virtue of thrift. The spendthrift, in the same way, thinks that it is useless for him to begin to save while his income is small; when he gets an increase in his salary, he will lay up some-

thing. The virtue and the habit of frugality are not, he thinks, for those of narrow incomes. And when the increase comes, having accustomed himself to spend every cent of his income, he keeps right on spending it all. The habit of pouring it all out, of emptying the pockets, becomes inveterate ; and when that habit is formed, it matters not at all whether much or little is in the pocket at the beginning of the week or the month ; it all goes long before the end of it.

The habit of frugality, like the habit of benevolence, must be formed while our means are limited. That is the time when habits are formed. The fact that our income is small has nothing to do with the case. The principle can be adopted and followed precisely as well when the purse is light as when it is heavy. You can learn to give when you are earning five dollars a week just as well as when you are earning fifty dollars a week, perhaps better. You cannot give so much, but you can give just as intelligently, just as conscientiously ; and you can put as much good will into a small gift as into a large one. The best giver in the New Testament record was that poor

widow with her two mites. She got more benefit out of her gift, — perhaps conferred more benefit by her gift, — than any other benefactor of that old history.

The notion that nobody ought to be expected to give but the rich people, is about as mischievous a notion as there is afloat. It is not only mischievous, it is fallacious. The fact is that much the best part of the giving of this world — perhaps the largest part — is done by those whom the apostle James calls the poor of this world. The poor of this world are a great multitude; the rich are but a handful in number. And the small gifts and benefactions of the poor make, after all, a tremendous aggregate. You find, continually, among the very poorest people, the most beautiful illustrations of a genuine charity. These seemingly helpless ones do help each other constantly. In sickness, in failure of work, in every misfortune, they bear one another's burdens. In these self-denying ministries they find a large part of their real happiness. Suppose that it were not so. Suppose that everyone who had not an ample income and an independent

livelihood were to consider himself absolved from benevolence, and fully entitled to go through the world without ever opening his hand to bestow any help upon his fellow-men ! Suppose that the swarming millions of the poor were shut out from the privilege of cultivating the graces of sweet charity, and were condemned to live a perfectly egoistic life ! What kind of world would this be ? No charity anywhere, except among the rich or the well-to-do, or those in independent circumstances ! No self-denial for love's sake, except among the fortunate classes ! Would you like to live in a world in which the principle of conduct followed by nineteen-twentieths of its inhabitants was purely egoistic, in which all but an insignificant fraction of the people lived for themselves alone ?

You do not live in any such world, and you never will. For the poor, who are in an overwhelming majority, have no purpose of letting the rich and the well-to-do get all the benefit of the practice of benevolence. The best part of the good of life comes to them in the chances they get of denying themselves for others, and in sharing their

small resources with those in need, and they know it.

If the secret of happiness is found in sharing, it is worth while to keep it in sight, as one of the things to be learned. Like most of the other permanent values of character it can be learned; it is largely a matter of habit; as we learn to think by thinking, and to speak by speaking, so we learn to give by giving.

Of course the giving of money is not the only kind of giving that we need to learn.

The first gift ought to be the inclusive gift — the gift of one's self. The world asks no less of us. That is the debt we owe, and we must not try to evade it. We are not our own. We cannot live for ourselves in this world without bringing anarchy and confusion and every evil work into the world. You can no more logically or rationally live for yourself than the eye or the heart or the hand can live for itself. You are a member of the social body; you cannot separate yourself from it; your relation to it is a relation of giving and receiving. What you shall receive from it is not for you wholly to determine; what you shall give



to it is to some extent matter of choice with yourself, and it is, far and away, the most important matter. The good of living, the meaning and significance of life are found not in what the world gives you, but in what you give the world.

The giving of money, whether you have little or much to give, will not be the whole nor the best of your giving. I know some rich people who give a great deal of money, but who give something better than money — their time, their thought, their care, their sympathy, their love to their fellow-men.

Nevertheless, in this age of mercantilism, you have got to learn, for your own soul's sake, to give money. And while I do not lose sight of the value of all these other gifts of love and labor and service which you will be permitted to bestow, I wish to fix your attention upon the importance of cultivating this habit of sharing your material goods and gains with your fellow men. The fact is that the one object of desire, which in the present day overshadows every other, is financial independence. It is this, more than anything else,

that the hearts of the sons of men are set upon. It is in this, therefore, that their greatest danger consists. There is just as much danger of people's becoming idolaters now as there was in the days when the children of Israel were in the wilderness of Sin. Covetousness, says the apostle, is idolatry. There is a terrible danger that men will grow up to be idolaters — to live mainly for money. And therefore there is need that we should begin early to learn the true value of money; how to use it for the highest purposes, how to keep the love of it subordinate to the law of righteousness and the law of love.

Let me offer, then, a few practical maxims which may guide you in the cultivation of this essential quality of the highest manhood.

First, then, remember that what you give must be your own. You have no more right to give away other people's money in charity than you have to spend other people's money on your pleasures. That in your hands which equitably belongs to another you must return to him; it is not yours to give.

Well, then, you say, nobody who is in debt has any right to give anything in charity. I do not think that this follows. There are a good many kinds of debts. Some of them must be discharged at once, — they are due or overdue ; but others are not yet due ; we have every reason to think that we shall be able to meet them when they are due, even if we allow ourselves, for other purposes, something beyond the necessities of life.

Here is a young man who has five dollars in his pocket, every cent of which is due to his landlady or his laundress. He has no right to give one dollar of that to the heathen or the Flower Mission, and compel those who have done him a service to wait for their reward. But if he has seven dollars in his pocket, and if he is going to spend for cigars or for baseball tickets the two dollars which he does not owe, he has a right to give one of those dollars to some worthy charity. What he thus gives comes out of his own luxuries or indulgences ; it is a true self-denial.

Many of us are in debt for property which we have purchased, and have prom-

ised to pay for at certain specified dates. We are meeting these payments promptly. And we are able, besides meeting these payments, by the exercise of some self-denial, to find some money that we can use for benevolent purposes. Although we are in debt, we have a right to use part of our income in this way. If a man purchases property or makes investments of any kind, and the transaction extends over a term of years, during all of which time he is bearing obligations, shall we say that he has no right, until all these obligations are met, to give anything away in charity? If that is the rule, very few business men, of any grade, would ever give anything. For there are not many business men who are not constantly in debt to somebody. Bills payable, or notes which have not yet matured, are always on their accounts. The solvent business man expects to meet his obligations promptly; but he expects to live meantime, and to enjoy life, — to have some of the pleasure of life as he goes along. He would make no contracts, he would incur no obligations, which did not provide for this. It is necessary to his health, to the

prolongation of his life, that he should have something more than just enough to keep body and soul together. He has outings now and then; he has amusements, he has some enjoyment of the luxuries and pleasures of life, and he wrongs nobody by taking it, even if he is in debt, so long as he meets his obligations promptly as they mature. Now if a man in debt is entitled to spend upon himself something more than is necessary to preserve life, he is also entitled to subtract from his current gains something for the uses of charity. If he provides what is necessary to meet his obligations as they mature, then what he gives in charity is not withheld from his creditors; it is simply withdrawn from the funds which he is spending on himself or investing for his own benefit.

The practical side of the matter is simply this, that if, in this age of credit, none but those who are wholly out of debt give anything benevolently, the overwhelming majority of those who hold the wealth of the world will never give anything; the streams of beneficence will run dry; and all the charities of the world will cease to exist.



You consider that it is your duty, not merely to yourself, but also to your creditors and your neighbors, while you are bearing these financial obligations, to keep your bodies well nourished and in good condition, and your minds refreshed, so that you may be able to take reasonable views of life, and perform your part as a man or woman in society. Why is it not equally your duty to keep alive in your soul that sacred flame of divine love which links you with all your fellow-men, and makes you the partner of their woes and the sharer of their needs? And if you are to preserve this part of your nature from starvation, you must give it a chance to exercise itself in the deeds of charity. You cannot keep it alive on kind words and generous wishes.

The fact that you are in debt is not, then, a good reason why you should refuse to give anything in charity, though it is a good reason why you should not give so much that you will not be able to meet your obligations as they mature.

2. It is involved in all that I have said that the giving of most of us will involve

some personal sacrifice. What we give is taken out of that which we could spend upon our own pleasures, and would be glad to spend in that way. There are those whose gifts are from their superfluity. Not many of those who are reading these words are in this class. What they give will cost them some self-denial. And this is the giving that is worth most to you and me. When we learn so fully to identify ourselves with the welfare of our fellows that it gives us pleasure to shorten our own allowance of luxuries or pleasures that we may minister to their well-being, we shall have learned the great lesson of life.

3. Learn to give systematically, intelligently, not merely from impulse. You can no more afford to give only when you happen to feel like it, than you can afford to eat only when you happen to feel like it. A regular habit of benevolence is better than an impulsive method. Consider well what your income is, and what you can afford to use in this way; and bestow your gifts, as you make all your other expenditures, under the guidance of reason and conscience.

4. Learn to give judiciously, to put it, —

in that phrase which has been profaned by political bribers, but which was borrowed originally from the vocabulary of charity, — where it will do the most good. The great majority of those who appeal to you for charity must be denied ; the true charity is to deny them. What they ask for would be a curse to them if they had it. You must beware of doing harm with your benefactions. These people who ask for your money may need your friendship, your sympathy, your counsel, your assistance in procuring employment ; try to find out what are their *real* needs, and supply them if you can, but beware how you encourage anybody to walk in the slippery road of dependence and mendicancy.

Finally, let us seek to learn the grace of giving, — so that our gifts shall never be marred by ostentation or parade, — so that they shall bear with them comfort and solace and benediction to all who receive them. Sometimes true kindness demands the complete self-effacement of the giver. Those who need your charity would not take it from your hand. You know that they need it ; but you know that their

pride would not let them receive it. What you bestow upon them must be done in such a way that it will not be possible for them to discover the giver or return the gift. But, more often, it should be possible for you to put so much of real good will, of generous consideration, into your benefactions, that those who receive them will feel that the money is the least part of what you have given them; that the respect for them which is evinced by your treatment of them — by your delicacy, your sympathy, your evident determination that the transaction shall be in the strictest sense confidential — not only does not wound their self-respect but strengthens their faith in themselves and in their fellow-men. And whenever, in all your life, you are able to contribute to any good cause, let your bounty be dispensed, whether it be little or large, with such readiness, such cheerfulness, such a shining face, and such a happy voice, — that they through whose hands it passes shall see that you are indeed the true disciple of Him who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

## VI

### LEARNING TO SERVE

THERE was once a boy who was reported to have said, when he was twelve years old, that he was not in this world in business for himself ; that he was here upon his Father's business. These are the first recorded words of one whose impress upon human history has been deeper and more abiding than that of any one who ever trod this planet. That it was no momentary conceit, but a permanent conviction, is proved by the entire record of his after life. "I came not," he said more than once, "to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." "I am among you as one that serveth."

I am not raising any metaphysical questions as to the content of this personality ; I only wish to call attention to the fact that he bore, through all his life, the consciousness of being under orders. The great self-surrender, at the last, was in fulfilment



of a will to which his own was always obedient. "This commandment," he said, "have I received from my Father."

It is not an intricate question — the question which this boy had settled when he was twelve years old; other boys have settled it, no doubt, as early as that — if less definitely, still intelligently and positively. It is the simple question respecting the aim of life — the ruling idea. What shall it be? Shall it be self-pleasing, self-aggrandizement, or shall it be service? "Even Christ," says Paul, "pleased not himself." The intimation seems to be that he might have done it if any one might. The instincts and natural cravings of Jesus were all so healthy and normal that it would have been safer for him than for most of us to seek the satisfaction of his own desires. But this was not his habit. The movement of his activities was not in the direction of self-pleasing. He was not considering how he could make himself more comfortable and more prosperous; how he could make other people minister to him; how he could get the currents of good flowing into his life; all that was

foreign to his thought; he was thinking rather how he could help and comfort and bless and serve others. The ruling idea of his life was not self-pleasing or self-aggrandizement, but service. He was looking out, and not in.

One or the other of these principles is now, and is going to be, the ruling principle of the life of every one of us. It will be the main motive of our lives to get for ourselves all we can out of the world, or to give all we can of ourselves to the world.

The main motive of our lives at present may be obscured and concealed by many lesser motives, by many subsidiary purposes; it may not be quite evident to other people, and it may not always be evident to ourselves what it is, but the current is flowing toward one of these ends or toward the other. We ought to know which way it is going; we ought to come to a clear understanding with ourselves about it. What is our life now, and what is it to be? *In its prevailing purpose* is it now a selfish life or an unselfish life? Are we here to do our own will or the will of the Infinite Love, whom Jesus Christ knew to be his Father,

and whom you ought to know to be your Father too? That is, I think, the first and the most vital question for every one. It is not an intricate question; but it is a searching question, and none of us can afford to put it aside.

When we speak of the relation of Jesus to the Father, we come to the heart of the whole matter. "I must be about my Father's business," he said. It was because his will was one with that of the Father, and because the Father's will toward every one of his children is love, that his life became what it was,—a ministering life,—a life of service. What the old Psalmist said, Jesus knew to be true: "The Lord is good to all and his tender mercies are over all his works." "Thou openest thine hand and suppliest the wants of every living thing." If therefore he could but say, "I and my Father are one," he must also feel that the entire meaning of his life was ministry; that he was here in the world to find his joy in service.

Many of us profess our belief also in the Fatherhood of God. That is the article in our creed on which we put the strongest

emphasis. That is a doctrine, we say, which has been recovered from the mass of theological rubbish in which it had long been buried and restored to the rank that belongs to it. Well and good. Do we accept the doctrine then, as Jesus accepted it? In recognizing God as our Father do we place ourselves in a filial attitude before him, and seek to be in harmony with his great purposes?

We have been saying from our childhood, many of us, the prayer that Jesus taught us: "Our Father which art in heaven." How much do we mean by this? When we call him our Father, what is implied in the word? Is it only that we wish him to exercise over us a fatherly care and protection; that we desire him to forgive us when we sin and to save us from the consequences of our own wrongdoing and to take us to heaven when we die? That was not the way Jesus used the prayer. That was not his conception of the meaning of the divine Fatherhood. To him it meant the most constant and strenuous endeavor *to find out the Father's will and do it*. That was what he thought a son of God ought first of

all to do. If you and I put into that prayer the meaning that he put into it, the central petition of it will always be, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth." That means that you and I — unless we mock God with our petitions — are going to do our best to know what his kingdom is, and what his will requires, and to bind the energies of our lives to the answering of our prayers.

And if we find it to be true that the Father in heaven, whom thus we confess, is one whose name is Love, who is always trying to do good to all his creatures, then our life work will be clearly laid out for us; we know what our Father's business is, and we shall know that that is our business; that the ruling passion and purpose of life must be to help and serve and bless our fellows.

This is the Christian idea of life; I think that it is also the scientific idea. I believe that the conception of human life which increasingly prevails among students of society is that which recognizes a vital relation between ourselves and our neighbors, and which teaches that the true self



is not an isolated self but a social self ; that we live in the life of others and not by separation from them ; that it is only as we share the larger life of humanity and contribute to it, that we can be said to live at all.

But the practical test is more easily applied. Who have lived the real lives, the great lives, and who are living them to-day ? What kind of life does the universal suffrage of humanity pronounce to be the "life indeed" ? Is it the life that separates the man from his kind, and sets up his own interest as central and dominating, demanding of the rest tribute and service ; or is it the life that identifies him with the larger interests of humanity and spurs him to make what contribution he can to the common weal ?

Great graspers there have been — great egoists — men who trampled under their feet all the rights and liberties of their fellows in their ascent to fortune and fame ; are they the men whom the world remembers to-day with gratitude ?

No, it is not such as these whose names we treasure, whose characters we revere.

It is rather those who have clearly known that they were not in this world in business for themselves ; that they were here upon their Father's business.

Dante Alighieri — what was he doing here six hundred years ago ? He was not looking after the interests of Dante Alighieri. If he had been, he would not have lived in exile and died in poverty. He was here to bear witness to the truth he knew — to God's truth, as he saw it ; he was here to be faithful to his high calling as a son of God, as a witness of the light ; from that purpose nothing could swerve him, threats, buffetings, blandishments, bribes ; therefore he did such a work for his country and for the world as none other could do ; therefore even unto this day, has his name been the watchword of those who strove for a united Italy ; therefore has his deathless song woven itself through all the world's literature and made for itself a place in the thoughts of men for all the generations.

Michelangelo, the mighty sculptor, painter, builder, singer — what was his errand on the earth ? Not to put pelf in the pocket or a sceptre in the hand of Michelangelo.

To no sordid or self-seeking aims was his vast power directed. He lived, through all his days, a life of the utmost frugality — dining on a crust, sleeping on a pallet, caring nothing for personal gains; thus he lived in the days when kings and queens were bidding for his services and pontiffs were supplicating his coöperation. What tribute he might have levied on the great men of the earth if that had been his aim! But much of his best work he gave away; a large part of his time he wrought with no compensation but the bare supply of his immediate necessities; for the seventeen years of the most laborious toil that he gave to the erection of St. Peter's he refused to take a penny. The work that he wanted to do was work that should reveal the beauty of the Lord, and lift up the thoughts of men. It was this unselfish purpose, burning in his breast and shaping all his life, that made him the man he was and gave him the place he holds in human history.

George Washington — our great first president — was he in business for himself while he was in the world? He was a tolerably successful man — we may admit;

how did he win his success? Was he always looking out for the interests of George Washington, setting up the pins to secure promotion, organizing political machines, making himself solid with the influential classes, scheming to get things fixed so that everything should come his way? Nothing of all that, — absolutely nothing. No position that he held was ever sought by him; there is not the slightest reason to believe that he ever openly or secretly tried to secure any office or honor that he ever held; he simply did his whole duty, whenever it was laid upon him; he shunned no perils, he evaded no risks, he never asked how his interests were going to be affected by what he did or refused to do; he was here not to get gain or power for himself, but to serve his country and his God. For the entire service of seven years at the head of the army of the Continental Congress he refused to receive one cent of compensation; he permitted the Congress to pay his expenses, nothing more. To his country he gave everything he had to give, asking nothing of her but the privilege of serving her. It

was this ruling purpose, dominating all his life from his boyhood to the hour when he laid down the burdens and cares of the presidency and went home to Mount Vernon, that lifted his name above every other in the annals of his time.

There are men in these days in whom the same high motive is constantly ruling. I think we must admit that the real force which controls the conduct of the German Emperor is simply this deeply rooted conviction, that he is the servant of God and of his people. It is not for himself that he is ruling; it is for the glory of God and the prosperity of Germany. Erratic and rash and impetuous as he often is, nothing indicates any aberration from this high purpose. I have found a fine estimation of the man in an American magazine, in which this fact is emphasized: —

“Believing with all the might of his earnest and deeply religious nature that he and his are the agents appointed by heaven to lead the German Empire to greatness and success, he realizes that the position exacts terrible obligations. These obligations he strives unceasingly to live up to.



Duty has been from the first his paramount watchword. On the very eve of his marriage he exercised his company as usual and on the morning of the ceremony rode over to Potsdam to decorate a sergeant-major. There is a strain of real loftiness in his orations on the duties of royalty. 'You know,' he once said, 'that I regard my position as appointed for me by God, and in this consciousness I daily labor; and be assured that every morning and evening of my life I begin and end the day with a prayer for my empire, my nation, and Brandenburg, which is so near to my heart. . . . Kingship by the grace of God expresses the fact that we Hohenzollerns accept our crown only from Heaven, and are responsible to Heaven for the performance of its duties. I, too, am animated by this view, and am resolved to act and govern on this principle.' In all this there is nothing ridiculous. If sincerely held, — and there is no question of the sincerity with which the Kaiser holds it, — it is as fine and inspiring an ideal as any ruler could be possessed by; year in and year out it braces the Kaiser to a sum total

of exertion that without some such support would prove too much for any human being. He was once accused of spending too much time on sea voyages. His reply showed a very pleasing aspect of the man. 'Whoever,' he said, 'alone with himself on the high seas, standing on the ship's bridge with only God's firmament above him, has entered into the chamber of his own heart, will not mistake the value of such a voyage. I could wish that many of my countrymen might know such hours, in which a man can give account to himself of what he has won and done. Here lies a cure for over-estimation of self, and that we all need.' Such a man is not of the type that spares himself or allows others to spare themselves. He levies unstinted toll on himself, but he expects as severe a tribute from his subjects. Moulding himself on the solid principle of duty he looks for all others to do likewise."

I do not believe in monarchy; that is to say, I believe that the ideal republic is a better government than the ideal monarchy; but I believe that the real monarchy, whose head is a strong man with a passionate devotion to duty, and who is able to inspire his

people with the same devotion, will be an infinitely better government than the real republic whose citizens are spending their lives in looking out for their interests.

But we do not need to go to monarchies for illustrations of the principle we are considering. There have been men in high places nearer our time than the days of Washington, and nearer our home than Germany, to whom service and not self-aggrandizement was the guiding star; men who were not in business for themselves; who believed in God and in his kingdom and meant to be loyal to him first, last, and always, no matter what might become of them.

Not to mention those now living, who would to-day deny that Grover Cleveland was a man of this type; never a self-seeker; absolutely free from the vice of personal ambition; ready always to sacrifice his individual interest to his sense of obligation. More than once he did what Gladstone alleged that he had often done — he committed political suicide, and the thing was done almost gayly: he was glad to have a chance to stand for the thing that he knew

to be right in the face of great personal sacrifice. Any one who will read Mr. Gilder's intimate "Record of Friendship" will see how much of this high quality was represented in Mr. Cleveland, and will know why the people delight to honor him.

Instances less conspicuous but still notable are in view all about us. Not long ago a man stepped down in life's late afternoon from the presidency of one of our greatest universities, which he had occupied with honor and success through all the best years of his life, and after his resignation the fact leaked out that all this work had been done by him purely for the love of service, — that he had received no salary, no compensation whatever for all those years of toil. He had some income of his own on which he could live, and he rejoiced in his ability to give freely the strength of his life to the college that he loved. It is evident that he was not in business for himself.

And there are multitudes of others in the same high calling who are governed by the same principle, and although not many of them are able, like President Dwight, to refuse all compensation, hundreds of them

do refuse offers of promotion which involve the sacrifice of interests that they regard as sacred, or the acceptance of conditions which would compromise their honor. I know a professor in a small college, with a small salary, who is perhaps the greatest authority in his subjects in this country; and he has refused, more than once, a place of the highest distinction in one of the great universities; because the small college needs him and the big college can get along without him. And there are scores of men, in this great profession, whom this conviction of duty, this passion for service, has held fast in places where the work was hard and the pay was poor; heroic and consecrated men who are not in business for themselves; who are here to understand and to do if they can the will of their Father in heaven.

I am sure that we all know such people as we have been talking about, and I am equally sure that we all honor them. There are frauds and hypocrites, of course, who profess such devotion while their hearts are full of selfishness; but there are myriads of those who say little about it, but whose lives abundantly show that they have



learned the lesson of service. You find them in all the walks of life; among the very poorest people there are thousands and hundreds of thousands who find unalloyed pleasure in helping their neighbors; the compassions and the tendernesses and the neighborly friendships of the poor are very beautiful. You find them in the midst of the noise and the rush of the great business world, for there are business men, not a few, to whom wealth means stewardship, and who know that the opportunity of business is primarily the opportunity for service.

If you take up this purpose, then, of devoting your life to your Father's business, you will not be all alone; there will be a great many comrades, and good comrades, with whom you can take sweet counsel. The King of love has never been without followers in this world, though many who have named his name have followed him afar off, and comparatively few of them have ever got it into their heads that the man who really follows him is not in business for himself, but is always about his Father's business. But there are still a good many of these in the world, and their

number is growing. They are not all parsons or school teachers; some of them, like Dante Alighieri and John Ruskin and Thomas Carlyle, are men of letters; some of them, like Michelangelo, are artists; some of them, like George Washington and Abraham Lincoln and the German Kaiser and the American president, are men in the service of the state; among them are merchants, mechanics, manufacturers, professional men, — men and women in every avocation of life. In order that you should learn to do your Father's business it is not necessary that you should abandon your present calling — unless it be a nefarious calling — and devote yourself to some kind of professional philanthropy; nothing of the sort. Stand where you are, and serve right there. Whatever your business may be, determine to make it tributary to the welfare and happiness of mankind. If it is an honest and decent business you can make it so, and know that you are making it so. It isn't the kind of work that you are doing that counts so much as it is the spirit in which you are doing it.

Nor is it needful that you should im-

poverish yourself in doing your Father's business. It is not in depriving ourselves of the good of life that we best serve; it is in sharing the good of life with others. We do not wish them to be deprived of the good of life, and there is no more merit in depriving ourselves than in depriving them. We are not to trample others under our feet and crowd them from our path while we push on to fortune; neither are we to strip ourselves of all that makes life sweet and dear in order that they may have abundance; we are to take them with us, as we go along, rejoicing in all that we are able to do to make their lives larger and brighter, finding the same pleasure in their prosperity that we find in our own. We may well be prosperous if we can make many others the sharers of our prosperity. I do not think that we could be very happy in abounding and ostentatious luxury while we knew that many round about us were suffering for the lack of that which we might supply; but it is not at all clear that the best way to help our destitute neighbors is to come down to their level of destitution. Something important is done for them by showing them

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an ampler life than they are living and stimulating them to deserve it.

All these questions of how much we shall allow ourselves — what shall be the law of our sharing — are difficult questions to settle by a general rule; no one can solve them for his neighbor; each of us must work them out as best he can. All that is needful is that we recognize the fact that we are the children of our Father and that we are here in the world about his business; to learn his will and to do it; to share his thoughts about our brothers and his bounties with them; to follow him who came not to be ministered unto but to minister. This is the only kind of life that is worth living.

## VII

### LEARNING TO WIN

LIFE is a contest. There is a prize to win. What is the prize ?

It is manhood, or womanhood. To become what we were meant to be, to fulfil our destiny — that is what we are here for. Matthew Arnold said that God, according to science, is the stream of tendency by which all things fulfil the law of their being. His will, therefore, is that we should be perfect men and women. That is the prize that he has set before us.

In your patience, said Jesus, ye shall win your souls.<sup>1</sup> That is a great new meaning which the revised version of the New Testament has given us. By our patience he means more than mere passive endurance ; the word which he uses means *standing* under a load, — not merely *staying* under it, but *standing* under it ; not letting it bear

<sup>1</sup> Luke XXI, 19.



you down, but bearing it up; not getting out from under it, but carrying it. It takes strength and courage too, the highest kind of strength and courage, to hold out and hold still. It means the whole great discipline of life. And it is by this heroic, strenuous, persistence and endurance, that we *win our souls*.

Our souls are ourselves, — nothing less, nothing other. Your manhood, your personality, your character, your real selfhood, is a thing to be won. It is not an inheritance transmitted to you, or a possession conveyed to you, — it is a prize, an achievement, something to be won. You win your manhood as you win a battle.

When you stand on the threshold of life your soul, your real self, is a possibility, rather than an actuality. You have the rudiments of it, the foundations are laid, the outlines are suggested, but the fulfilment is yet to come. Possibilities are here, glorious possibilities, divine possibilities, but the realization is not yet. All is crude, inchoate, elementary; it doth not yet appear what you shall be; it does appear, to those of keenest discernment, what

you may be; but that depends on you — that is to be won.

What a chasm there is between the rudimentary cell and the fully developed organism; between the embryonic beginnings of any life and its maturity. Life, in every form, is a matter less of being than of becoming. What is to be always outranks what is. In the great Proem of John's gospel, — where the deep things of the Kingdom are sounded forth, — that hymn of life, which tells the story of the spiritual creation as the first of Genesis tells the story of the physical creation, tells it not in its formal laws but in its deeper meaning, I have been struck to see how the Greek verb of becoming constantly recurs. All things were *becoming* through him, and without him did nothing become. He was in the world and the world was *becoming* through him, and the world knew him not. This is the law of the human development. The future infinitive is man's tense, — *futurum fore*, — to be about to be. So that every human being confronts the days to come with the promise that the good of life is to be found in them, and that it is his

business to find it. Whether he is to be a man is left to him; he must win his manhood.

The mind of the young child is embryonic. Some children's minds unfold more rapidly than others; intellectual aptitudes are inherited, some start with a better outfit than others, and develop earlier; but in all cases of normal mental growth there is an immense chasm between the earlier and the later mental powers. The capacities of observation, of attention, of comparison, of inference, of ratiocination, are all feeble at first; they have to be built up, and strengthened, little by little, with appropriate discipline. The mind is not there at the beginning; the elements of a mind are there, and under proper tuition and stimulation the mind will appear, but even the intellectual power is largely to be won.

Imagination may seem to be a gift rather than an acquisition — a native endowment more than a product of culture; but here, too, it is the raw materials that are given; the creative or constructive imagination of the highest order is the fruit of discipline. None of our faculties more need schooling

and chastening than our imaginative faculties.

Our affections, too, are but embryonic in the beginning; it is by the tender care and nurture of the household and chiefly of the maternal love that they are called forth. People learn to love, as they learn nearly everything else. Some have larger capacities of love than others; native endowments of affection as well as of intellect are larger in some than in others; but there is none among us who has not gained by exercise a good part of his power of loving.

It is not true that selfishness is natural and unselfishness unnatural to man,—for the elements of altruism as well as of egoism are in the constitution of every human being; but the altruism certainly needs to be developed; that also is rudimentary at the beginning; the habit of identifying ourselves with others, of considering their welfare, of refusing to profit by their injury, is one that with most of us is not the result of spontaneous action; it is formed by painful attention and effort.

Truthfulness, also, the virtue which is the social bond, is, for most of us, a prize to be

won. Few children are instinctively truthful; the distinction between veracity and unveracity is much blurred in the minds of most children. Primitive races, as the ethnologists tell us, are defective in this virtue: the Old Testament shows us that the Early Hebrews did not reckon lying as sinful. Most of the Patriarchs were great liars, and the historian does not see any harm in their lying. It is only in the higher stages of social development that we find this virtue coming into prominence. What is true of the childhood of the races is true, as a rule, of the childhood of the individual. Truthfulness is not instinctive; it is a quality of the character that is gained by good discipline.

Above all, it is true that steadfastness, tenacity of will, consistency and thoroughness of purpose — the great fundamental quality of high character — is largely a result of discipline. There may be a certain obstinacy of temper in the original endowment; we find little children who are sufficiently wilful, and sometimes we are inclined to reckon on that as a large asset in the possibilities of a strong character;



but it may be questioned whether this kind of temperamental obstinacy is a source of strength. What we want is a steadfast adherence to ideas — not to unreasoning impulses; and the disposition to stick to a whim may inhibit the entrance of an idea. The quality which we are talking about is the power to hold well-formed ideas or purposes of life steadily before the mind, until they become dominant in the life and are realized in conduct. And this I say is a power which most of us are obliged to win. This is the very citadel of manhood, and few there be that get possession of it without a severe and protracted struggle.

I will not continue this hasty analysis of the self into its elements; but all can see that the powers which go to make up manhood are powers which belong to us, in the beginning, only in a rudimentary form, only as elements which are to be developed, as outlines which are to be filled up, as possibilities which are to be realized. A man is not a ready-made product, thrown off by the fiat of a Creator; he is a being with reason and free will who is placed in this world in the midst of circumstances

more or less propitious, with a certain outfit of rudimental faculty, with a certain vision of ideals, and who is bidden to win manhood for himself. The goods of the spirit, the values of character, the qualities of virtue, are no more yours by gift than are the external goods of life, property, and fortune. What Nature does for you, what God does for you, is to give you a chance to get a *living* by effort; and to give you a chance to get *life* by effort. The greater good will not be yours on easier terms than the lesser. If you want a fortune, you must win it, and if you want manhood, you must win that. A soul, a self, a full rounded personality, is worth more than a fortune; a fortune is nothing but a curse without it; and if you care to have a soul, you must win it. God gave you, at your birth, the rudiments of manhood, and opened before you its possibilities; the ground plan is there, and the direction in which your growth should proceed is clearly pointed out; but your growth is very largely under your own control; and if, instead of developing the great qualities of manhood, clear intellect, pure imagination, deep and true

affection, genuine good will, you proceed to develop the tentacles of the cuttlefish, or the absorbent powers of the sponge, or the burrowing tendencies of the mole, — you will not win the prize that is set before you ; manhood will not be your portion ; you will be an aborted soul.

You want to know — you who stand not far from the entrance of the ways that lead to life — you whose years are yet before you and whose prizes are yet to win — you want to know whether success in the winning of one's self does not depend on the enviroing conditions, the aids, incitements, influences that surround us and befriend us and open the ways for us and lead us on. To this I answer that these surroundings greatly help or greatly hinder our progress, but that they determine no man's destiny. Some of the greatest souls have come out of conditions the most hostile ; some of the meanest out of the most favoring circumstances. Indeed, the tragedy of our days is the constant and fatal descent of our youth, by platoons and regiments, from the heights of opportunity to the depths of mental and moral worthlessness.

No; you must not for a moment get it into your minds that this great possession of manhood or womanhood can be bequeathed to you by parents, or purchased for you with money, or even made over to you by love; there are no schools that can furnish you with it, there are no teachers who have the power of imparting it, you must win it for yourself. And you must win it honestly. No cheating or indirection is possible here. This is a realm where something can never be got for nothing; full equivalents must be paid every time. Fortunes may be gotten by fraud or cunning or extortion, but not characters. Mental and moral discipline, sound manhood, are never won by a lucky throw or a sharp trick. Nor are the obstacles and adversaries in your path such as you can get round by artful dodging; you have got to confront them and overcome them in fair fighting.

We who are older, we who love you, we who have watched you in your helpless infancy, whose care sheltered you in your childhood, whose hands have led you up to the entrance of the paths of life, — we can help you, a little, — but not very much.

The greatest danger for you is that we shall try to help you altogether too much, so that our help shall become a hindrance and our incitement an impediment. We can try to give you the right ideals, to guide you toward the right choices; but when we undertake to smooth all the paths, to take away the obstacles, or to lift you over them, we make a fatal and terrible mistake.

The trouble with many of us seems to be that we are bent on finding for ourselves, in all the movements of our lives, the line of least resistance. That is a good enough rule for mechanical work; it may even be a sound maxim in the application of the social forces; but as Dean Briggs of Harvard says, "it is an extraordinarily inadequate theory for the education of man. We see parents, possibly we are parents, who bring up children 'along the lines of least resistance'; and we know what the children are. Is it illogical to infer that children taught at school 'along the lines of least resistance' are intellectually spoiled children, flabby of mind and will? For any responsible work we want men of character, not men who



from childhood up have been personally conducted and have had their education warped to the indolence of their minds."

The soul that habitually and forever seeks in all its career the lines of least resistance goes by that road to its doom. That is not the path in which manhood is won; it is the path in which it is always lost. "If a brief definition of ideal or moral action were required," says Professor James, "none could be given which would better fit the appearances than this: *It is action in the line of the greatest resistance.*" Listen to that, you shirkers and dawdlers—you people who never do anything that you do not like to do; who never study anything that you do not like to study; who are looking for the short cuts and the soft snaps and the easy berths and the flowery pathways; the path to virtue, to moral nobility, to manhood, follows *the line of greatest resistance*. You who spend your lives in shunning that path are turning your backs on manhood. It is not in doing the things that are easy but the things that are hard that you win your souls. It is not in the places where the conditions are all

favorable that we develop our characters most rapidly, but in the places where the odds are against us and life is most strenuous. A young man was telling me not long ago that it was impossible for him to live a decent and honorable life in the town where he was then residing, because the community was so utterly depraved. I told him that there was no better place in the world for him to be a man than that place; that probably the most splendid opportunity he would ever have to win manhood was right there. These are the kind of tests that a man who really wants to be a man will not shrink from: he will welcome them. No matter what the principalities and powers may be that rise up against him, he is ready to face them; he knows that they cannot overpower him.

"When a dreadful object is presented," says Professor James again, "or when life as a whole turns up its dark abysses to our view, then the worthless ones among us lose their hold on the situation altogether, and either escape from its difficulties by averting their attention, or, if they cannot do that, collapse into yielding masses of

plaintiveness and fear. The effort required in facing and consenting to such objects it is beyond their power to make. But the heroic mind does differently. To it, too, the objects are sinister and dreadful — unwelcome, incompatible with wished-for things. But it can face them, if necessary, without for that losing its hold upon the rest of life. The world thus finds in the heroic man its worthy match and mate; and the effort which he is able to put forth to hold himself erect and keep his heart unshaken is the direct measure of his worth and function in the game of human life. He can stand this Universe. He can meet it and keep up his faith in it in presence of those same features which lay his weaker brethren low. . . . And hereby he makes himself one of the masters and the lords of life. He must be counted with henceforth; he forms a part of human destiny."

Yes: he has won his soul. He is a man. And it is thus that souls are won. There is no other way to win them. They are won by facing the stern facts of life unflinchingly; by getting right under the

burdens and the tasks that belong to us and carrying them, — by heroic endeavor and heroic resistance. They are won by turning toil into recreation and drudgery into delight. Have you not learned how to take a difficult and disagreeable task and just set your will to it, and do it, finish it, master it — *because it is hard?* If you can't do that, you haven't learned even the alphabet of pleasure yet, for there is no satisfaction like it for the healthy human soul.

I am afraid that this kind of training is not so common as once it was. I am afraid that there is a good deal of what is called education in these days which utterly ignores and even denies this fundamental law of character. Dean Briggs in the chapter from which I have already quoted, entitled "Old Fashioned Doubts about New Fashioned Education," expresses this fear very strongly. It is a chapter which every teacher and every parent, every student, also, ought to read, remembering as he reads that the writer is a man who probably has known intimately the mental history of more students, and has had

larger opportunities of testing modern educational tendencies, than any other man in the world. He is speaking in this chapter of Dr. Martineau's experience as a student. "In his early youth he said education was thought of use more to correct the weak side of one's nature than to develop its strong side, and so he gave double time to the studies he disliked. This he admits to have been too ascetic a rule, and yet preferable, on the whole, to the emasculate extreme of doing what one likes to do so prevalent to-day. Power to drudge at distasteful tasks he considers the test of faculty, the price of knowledge, and the matter of duty, and without this the stuff is in no man that will make him either the true scholar or the true Christian. At present the tendency is largely the other way. To choose none but studies agreeable and attractive from the start is what young people are more and more disposed to insist on. Virtually the student comes to the professor with a bill of rights in his hands, and says, 'Mind ! you must not be dull or I will go to sleep ; you must attract me, or I shall not get on an inch ; you must rivet



my attention or my thoughts will wander.' Very well, then, if such be your mood, go to sleep, do not get on an inch, and let your attention wander, is Dr. Martineau's justly contemptuous feeling at such sort of inanity. 'I warn you,' he says, 'that this enervated mood is the canker of manly thought and action.' Now there is something tonic and bracing in this attitude of rebuff to the half-weakly, half insolent tone of so many of the young people of to-day. If you want us to be virtuous, heroic, learned, and accomplished, they practically say to the church, the school, the college, to their parents, you will have to exert yourselves. We want to gratify you, but will tolerate nothing dry, nothing hard, nothing ascetic. The duty of the preacher or the professor is to waft us to Heaven or to Parnassus on gentle zephyrs; otherwise each must conclude to endure the pain of seeing us conclude to go somewhere else. There are hundreds of students who lack the very underpinning of education, who are so far from knowing this first lesson of training, namely that to be happy and successful *they* must get interested in what they have

to do, and that *doing it regularly and earnestly means getting interested* — so far from knowing this, that they sit in front of a book, helpless to effect any useful transfer of the author's mind to theirs. Brought up to feel that the teacher must interest them, they have become so reduced that they would like, as it were, to lie in bed and have their studies sent up to them."

Such is the kind of character to which a good many things seem to be leading up in these days, and I desire, with all my soul, to lift up my voice against it. In the name of all that is sacred, and honorable, and sound and strong in character, in civilization, do not let any such notions as these find a lurking place in your minds. This way ruin lies, for the individual, for the church, for the nation. Out of such rotten fibre as this nothing can be constructed; if those who are growing up among us, and who ought to be *becoming* men and women, are travelling this road, nothing awaits us but a deadly slump of our whole civilization.

It is time for teachers to take warning. Philosophies of education that are debilitating, emasculating, are abroad among them.

The pressure of this ease-loving world is strong upon them (it comes from pupils, and from parents also), to make the ways of the pupil all smooth and soft, to do most of his work for him, to relieve him from all stiff, rigorous, strenuous application of his mind to his work. Don't give in to such demands. You are there to see that these pupils win their own souls. Give them a chance to do it.

There are parents, too, as I have said, to whom this truth ought to come home. I heard the other day of a message sent by a parent to the teacher — such messages are not rare — to the effect that children could not be expected to get their lessons unless the lessons were made interesting and attractive to them; that if pupils were not doing good work it was the teacher's fault. That tone is taken, not seldom, in these days. Such parents are doing what they can to send their children to destruction.

Some of the young folks who read these words may find such counsel rather unwelcome, but it is the everlasting truth, and they cannot afford to spurn it or neglect it. If you want souls, you must win them.

Many of you are keenly interested in the question whether you are going to win fortune, fame, social position, the means and opportunities of pleasure; but there is only one question, after all, that is of any real importance — the question whether you are going to win or lose yourselves. What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose himself?

There are a great many other truths hereabouts which you must not forget; this for one, that you need divine help in winning your own soul; this, for another, that you cannot win your own soul without working to win other souls; but the one truth that I would burn into your consciousness if I could, is this truth, — that manhood, womanhood, is a prize to be won; that all gains are worthless and accursed to those who have not won it; that there is no easy path to it; that it cannot be won without toil, hardship, drudgery, strenuous endeavor, strenuous resistance. It means something to be a man or a woman; it is worth something, but it costs something, and you never will get it without paying full price.

## VIII

### LEARNING TO WAIT

IN my boyhood there was a poem which was on everybody's lips ; perhaps no serious utterance in verse was ever known to a larger proportion of the American people than were these stanzas along in the forties. They were the production of a young professor in Harvard College whose name, then not much known, was a temptation to smart editors — Mr. Longfellow. This particular lyric was entitled "A Psalm of Life: What the heart of the young man said to the Psalmist." There are few intelligent persons in whose minds some phrases of this poem have not found lodgment. Its lines have woven themselves through literature and the common speech of men, and it is now no more possible that it should be forgotten than the Twenty-third Psalm, or Lincoln's Gettysburg speech.



It seems strange to some of us now, when we repeat it, that it should have had such wonderful vogue sixty or seventy years ago; the sentiment sounds rather commonplace and the utterance somewhat stilted. By the time I reached college, a few years later, the perfervid enthusiasm of the verses had become a little stale; and we used to hang upon them a nonsense refrain of a very flippant sort, turning their sober exhortations into derision in our songs. It was a kind of sacrilege, I now think; college boys do themselves no good when they trifle with sentiments like these. For the verses have the true ring after all; the note of a genuine idealism is struck by them; the welcome which the popular heart gave them in that morning of American letters was not undeserved.

The only word of this poem to which I now desire to call attention is the last word. One hardly knows how this word got itself appended to the poem. It seems to have no natural relation to it. It is almost the antithesis of all that has gone before. The whole poem is a call to the putting forth of energy: —

"Not enjoyment and not sorrow  
 Is our destined end or way,  
 But *to act*, that each to-morrow  
 Find us farther than to-day.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant;  
 Let the dead Past bury its dead;  
 Act, act in the living Present,  
 Heart within, and God o'erhead."

I wonder if Longfellow had been reading a German book not then translated into English, entitled "The Vocation of Man," a book in which I found, not long ago, these words: —

"Not for idle contemplation of thyself, not for brooding over devout sensations: no, for action art thou here; thine action, and thine action alone, determines thy worth." This, at any rate, is the keynote of the whole poem, sustained through the last verse up to the very last word: —

"Let us then be up and doing,  
 With a heart for any fate,  
 Still achieving, still pursuing,  
 Learn to labor and to — *wait!*"

Oh! To *wait!* It seems a sort of anti-climax. That is the very last thing we

are thinking about. We are forging ahead, stirring ourselves up to action, pushing on, leaving footprints, as many as possible, on the sands of time: now we are suddenly halted, and bidden to learn to wait.

Well, I think that the word is a good and wholesome one, and I have no doubt at all that the poet was inspired to write it. A flash of insight came to him at the last minute, and he saw that all this strenuous working and marching and pushing and forging ahead needed to be tempered with patience; that the true psalm of life must not leave out that note. I distinctly remember how that truth used to come home to me, when, in my boyhood, I said these verses over to myself; the call to action of the rest of the poem always stirred me, but this last word, this providential word, made me understand that I had got to learn not only to work but also to wait.

Perhaps this lesson is not so often impressed upon American youth as it ought to be. The necessity of work, the dignity of work, the sacredness of work, the discipline of work, — about all this they hear a great deal; they get a great deal of suggestion

and admonition about learning to work; not so much as they need about learning to wait. But waiting, after all, is an integral part of the business of life; it is not all labor, there is also rest; not all struggle, sometimes repose; not all noise, but now and then silence. Nature is rhythmic; it demands contrasted phases of experience; shine and shade must be blended; pure light is as blinding as total darkness. It is just as needful therefore that we should know how to wait as that we should know how to work. The staple of life is work, no doubt; but life is not all staple; the minor ingredients must be well provided, and of good quality. The active powers must be trained, but the receptive powers must not be neglected.

The good of life is not always in sight; the processes of nature are slow; the thing that we are working for and hoping for is not yet ours; no matter how strenuous we may be we cannot lay our hands upon it; time is necessary for its production and completion; we must wait. "Behold," says the apostle, "the husbandman waiteth for the fruit of the earth, being patient

over it, until it receive the early and latter rain." The husbandman must wait. The wheat that is sown in the early autumn and puts forth its blade before the frosts must lie all winter under the snows until the spring sun revives its dormant life; the harvest is not gathered till midsummer. The orange grove, the apple or the peach orchard sets before us years of waiting; the growth cannot be greatly hastened; the recompense of toil is always long delayed. So is it with the herds in the stall and the flocks in the field; considerable periods must pass before they are serviceable to man, — periods that may be somewhat abridged by care and labor but cannot be greatly lessened.

Now as the work of the husbandman is the foundation of all our industries, so the main principles which rule in its administration are found ruling also in most other industries, and in these the rule of patience is enforced in one way or another; there is seed to plant and a harvest to be awaited.

Waiting is involved in some of the other practical arts that we have been studying. Learning to think is, in considerable part,



learning to wait. No admonition is more needed by the callow thinker than the lesson of patience. Not to be in too great a hurry about forming your opinions, about making up your mind concerning large and difficult questions, is one of the counsels of wisdom. Young people are prone to be in haste about forming their judgments: they want to straighten the thing right out and come to a decision about it, — to have an answer ready at once on every great question.

I get a great many letters asking my opinion on all sorts of questions from all sorts of people, young and old, and one of the interesting features which characterize these inquiries is the frequent assumption of the writers that any thoughtful man must have a clear, sharp, positive, dogmatic, categorical answer at the end of his tongue to almost any question which can be asked him. I do not wonder at this; for I am sure that there are quite a number of subjects about which my own opinions were much more positive sixty years ago than they are to-day. Larger knowledge has made my judgments much less magis-

terial. I am sure, now, that there are a good many subjects so large and complicated that one cannot wisely come to off-hand conclusions about them.

Some of the most mischievous men I have known in this country have been men with a sort of genius, who thought themselves prophets; who believed themselves to be able to pronounce decisively on great social questions with no careful investigation of the facts; who made up their minds at once, when a problem presented itself, and then spoke with the cocksureness which always carries away the populace. Their judgments always really rested on the most superficial aspects of the case in hand; of the deeper-lying causes they had no knowledge; if they had known anything of the experience of the world they would often have been aware that the remedies they so confidently urged had been more than once proved to be worse than the diseases they were trying to cure.

The trouble with these men was their extreme haste in forming opinions. They were too conceited to investigate anything; their intuitions were more author-

itative than all the science of the world. They could not wait till the facts were all in before they made up their minds; for facts indeed they had no respect; statistics were to them a snare and a delusion; their independent judgment was their sole reliance.

It is worth our while to wait for the facts. They are stubborn things; theories that ignore them are sure to come to grief.

You will have some serious thinking to do on many subjects. You will need to form clear and intelligent and sound opinions; let me counsel you to cultivate this virtue of patience in your thinking. Do not rush to conclusions. Wait till the facts are in sight on which judgment may be safely risked. Of course it will be sometimes necessary for you to act when you may be aware that your knowledge is not complete; you must do the best you can, upon such light as you have. I only counsel you to avoid rashness and haste in forming your conclusions — to hold your minds in a receptive attitude, always waiting for the light.

Especially pertinent is this counsel to

those who are dealing with the deep questions of theology and religion. Often when young people begin to think seriously upon the traditional beliefs which they find on their hands, they are in serious difficulties. This doctrine or that which they have accepted on the authority of others does not seem to them rational; it begins to look to them as though nothing was valid; they are strongly tempted to fling themselves out of all relations to the church, and to take up the weapons of warfare against it. How many have I found in this state of mind, in the course of my ministry! It is a critical time in the experience of any young man or woman. Not seldom they are met with unsympathy and even reproof: they are made to feel that in entertaining such doubt they are giving place to the devil; they are exhorted to confess their sin to God and put such doubts away from them. That is a sad mistake. The one word for such troubled souls is "Wait!" Do not be in any hurry about throwing away these beliefs on which you have been living so long. There is no need of any precipitate decision. Take

plenty of time to think it all over. Possibly you will need and find some restatements which will satisfy your mind. Possibly you may discover a larger view in which all your doubts will be reconciled. Probably there is something in these doctrines, on which so many great souls have fed and grown strong — if you can only get hold of them by the right end. Do not try to force your mind to a decision for or against them. Do not be hurried. You want to know the truth — of that you are certain, and God wants you to know it. He will help you to find it. Talk with him about it. Open your mind to his inspirations. Be patient and wait and he will lead you into the light !

It is not, however, in our thinking alone or chiefly that we must cultivate patience. In the practical life, even more than in the intellectual life, it is needed.

One of the serious defects of many characters, one of the chief reasons of failure in many lives, is the lack of this virtue. Probably the very hardest lesson that we have to learn, in this rushing age, is this lesson of patience. We want what we



want right away ; we do not wish to bide our time ; our time is now. In business life, in professional life, in political life, we are pushing fast and furiously toward the goal of our ambition. That is what every one else is doing ; we feel that if we cherish a less strenuous purpose than the rest we shall be left behind. Our heroes are all men who have shortened the path to fame or fortune — who have made no tarrying anywhere in the road. Here is a man in the thirties drawing a million-dollar salary : there hasn't been much waiting in his case ; *that* is our ideal ; that is the pace at which we all want to go. The fact that the man with the million-dollar salary had to give up his job before he had held it a year ought to make us pause ; perhaps if he had waited a little longer, the collapse might not have been so sudden.

This feverish eagerness to get on makes a good many young men quite unwilling to lay the proper foundations of study and discipline. They cannot wait to finish their studies, to train their minds for the tasks of life ; they want to get right into the arena at once. In every such case it is

plain that the work itself which they are going to do — the value of it — is a subordinate matter in their minds; it is the reward of the work, the gain or the place, on which their hearts are set. They ought to be able to see that there is essential dishonesty in this kind of ambition. The man doesn't care what kind of service he will render, only so that he gets his remuneration. A young doctor who is not willing to complete his medical studies because he wants to begin practice right away, knows that he is going to give people cheap and poor service — perhaps terribly costly service — for their money. He is going to try to get them to employ him and pay him for work which he knows that he is not well qualified to do; nay, he is going to invite them to trust their lives in the hands of one who is not properly trained to keep the sacred charge which is committed to him. It is a fraud; the intention is just as palpable and fraudulent as that of the man who sells sanded sugar or brass jewellery for gold, and far more serious in its consequences. And this fraud he perpetrates simply because he is unwilling to wait for

the day when he shall have gained the equipment which shall fit him for his work.

In every profession and calling the same vicious haste prevails; men are so eager to launch themselves into money getting that they refuse to pay the honest price of success, which is diligence and thoroughness of preparation for the work of life.

Boys are leaving school long before they get the education which they need to make them intelligent citizens and useful men, because they cannot wait to make their preparation — the rage of the multitude about them gets into their blood and they are not able to restrain themselves. Those who are pursuing courses of professional and technical training cannot wait to complete them; with minds untrained and wholly inadequate knowledge they thrust themselves out into the world of competition.

The results of their unprincipled and reckless haste are manifold and serious.

In the first place, many a career is wrecked by the lack of adequate training. The newcomer in the lists finds that he cannot do the thing that he is trying to do. The competitions of the world are keen; the

man who knows his business is pretty sure in the long run to hold his place, while the man who does not know his business is pushed to the rear. Those who cannot wait to fit themselves for the work of life are very apt to have plenty of time to wait a little further on when they are thrust out, by the law of natural selection, into the ranks of the unfit, and made to stand all day idle in the market-place, because no man will hire them.

But something worse than economic failure is apt to result from this unwillingness to pay honest price for success in diligence and thoroughness. The eager impatience that drives men out into the arena in this reckless way, makes them unprincipled, unscrupulous, careless of other men's rights and interests, ready to win the prizes on which their hearts are set by fair means or foul. Verily the wise man's words are true: "He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent." It is, as we have seen, a fundamentally dishonest motive that urges men into such haste; it is a purpose to get something for which you do not mean to give a full

equivalent; and the whole life is apt to partake of this dishonesty. So we see lawyers so eager to get practice and success that they are ready to resort to every kind of iniquity — to pack and bribe juries and prime witnesses, and poison the very fountains of justice: so we see engineers building bridges that collapse under the rushing train, and dams that give way before the swelling floods; so we see business men throwing conscience and humanity to the winds and trampling their rivals under their feet with no more scruple than if they were clods of the earth. All this springs from the haste to be rich — from the unwillingness to wait for the slow rewards of honest enterprise.

If we are to save our manhood, our integrity, our civilization, we must learn to wait; to wait for success till we have fairly earned it; to wait for position and responsibility till we have fitted ourselves for them; to wait for the crown of life till we have won it by fair fighting. "I am now thoroughly convinced," wrote Fichte to his Johanna, in the turning point of his life, "that the human will is free, and *that*



*to be happy is not the purpose of our being, but to deserve happiness."* When that is our conviction we can wait.

Not only in our strivings after individual success and welfare, but also in our labors for the improvement of political and social conditions we must learn to wait. Human progress is necessarily slow. Great evils cannot be instantly uprooted; great benefits cannot be forced upon communities wholly unprepared to receive them. First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear is the manner of the growth of the Kingdom. Reformers are often rash and impatient; they have their plans for mending the world and they see no reason why it should not be put in running order as promptly and certainly as a clock or a sewing machine. All it needs is a little new gearing, a belt, or a wheel, or something put to rights, and they get their apparatus ready and expect immediate results. It is not a rational expectation. The main trouble is with the human beings, not with the social machinery; and it takes time to make them over and get them ready for the new régime. You can give four

millions of slaves their political freedom with a stroke of the pen, but you cannot give them economic freedom, social freedom, moral freedom, by any such instantaneous process. These they must win by long courses of discipline. They must become responsible beings through the bearing of responsibility; they must win self-dependence by depending on themselves; they must become men by the struggle, the conflict, the endurance in which alone manhood is won.

You will have some great work to do, some of you who are younger, in making a better world of this: you will have battles to fight and victories to win; you have a right to be hopeful and resolute; but you must not expect too much; the race moves slowly. Tennyson in his early youth looked for a speedy advent of the millennium. So he sang: —

“Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range:

Let the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves of change.”

But that is not the way the great world goes, “spinning down the ringing grooves,”

like the Twentieth Century Limited; it often goes groaning and scraping along, and you find it hard to see that it is making any progress. So Tennyson thought in "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After."

"Forward, backward, backward, forward, in the  
immeasurable sea,  
Sway'd by vaster ebbs and flows than can be known  
to you and me.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Evolution ever climbing after some ideal good,  
And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the  
mud."

But, after all, this despairing cry is less true than the earlier enthusiasm. "It does move," this old world, with all its scraping and groaning; it is going to move faster and faster; and you are going to help to keep it moving; but you must not cherish any extravagant expectations. You must remember that the mills of the gods grind slowly; and that the Eternal One is never in a hurry. Society will not be railroaded through to Utopia by any social machinery that we can invent; we must often be content with small gains; "the good can well afford to wait."

Meanwhile we are not to relax our energies, or suspend our vigilance. We wait, but not listlessly nor hopelessly: we have no right to look for any good thing unless we are working for it with all our might. We are waiting for God, but of Him it was said by one who knew him well, "My Father *worketh* hitherto," and none rightly wait for him unless they are working with him.

"No idling now, no wasteful sleep  
From Christian toil our limbs to keep;  
No shrinking from the desperate fight,  
No thought of yielding or of flight;

"No love of present gain or ease,  
No seeking man or self to please;  
With the brave heart and steady eye  
We onward march to victory."

There is another and a still diviner patience which we must all learn to practise. Much of the good of life is often long withheld. Many of the things which our hearts are set upon, and which we feel would complete and perfect our lives, are not granted to us; for some good reason their coming is long delayed. Many a man

has toiled long and worthily for a good which he had a right to crave, and has known for many a day the heart-sickness of hope deferred. These are the severest tests of our heroism. It is far easier to rush into the conflict, to grapple with the herculean task, than simply to hold still and wait. But this is a good part of life's discipline; no one ever passes through it quietly, serenely, uncomplainingly, without gaining for himself a power that no other experience could bring. It is good to rise to the height from which we can discern the meaning of this great patience, and can calmly say :—

“Not yet ! Along the purpling sky  
We see the dawning ray ;  
But leagues of purple distance lie  
Between us and the day.

“Not yet ! The aloe waits serene  
Its promised advent hour, —  
A patient century of green  
To one full perfect flower.

“Not yet ! No harvest joy is sung  
In the sweet ear of spring,  
Nor hear we while the blade is young  
The reaper's sickle swing.



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“Not yet ! Before the crown the cross ;  
The struggle ere the prize ;  
Before the gain the fearful loss,  
And death, ere Paradise !”

But our waiting for any real good is never without hope. We know that it will at last be ours ; everything that we really need will come to us, sooner or later.

“To-day, or may be not to-day,  
To-night, or not to-night,  
All voices that command or pray,  
Calling me, calling me,  
Shall kindle in my heart such fire  
And in my eyes such light,  
That I shall see that heart’s desire  
I long to see !”

This, then, is the last word. Learn to wait ! Commit your ways to God and trust Him. Do His will as well as you can and leave the issue in His hands. If He keeps you waiting, you can afford to wait. All things are yours, so long as you are true to Him, — life and death, things present, things to come.



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